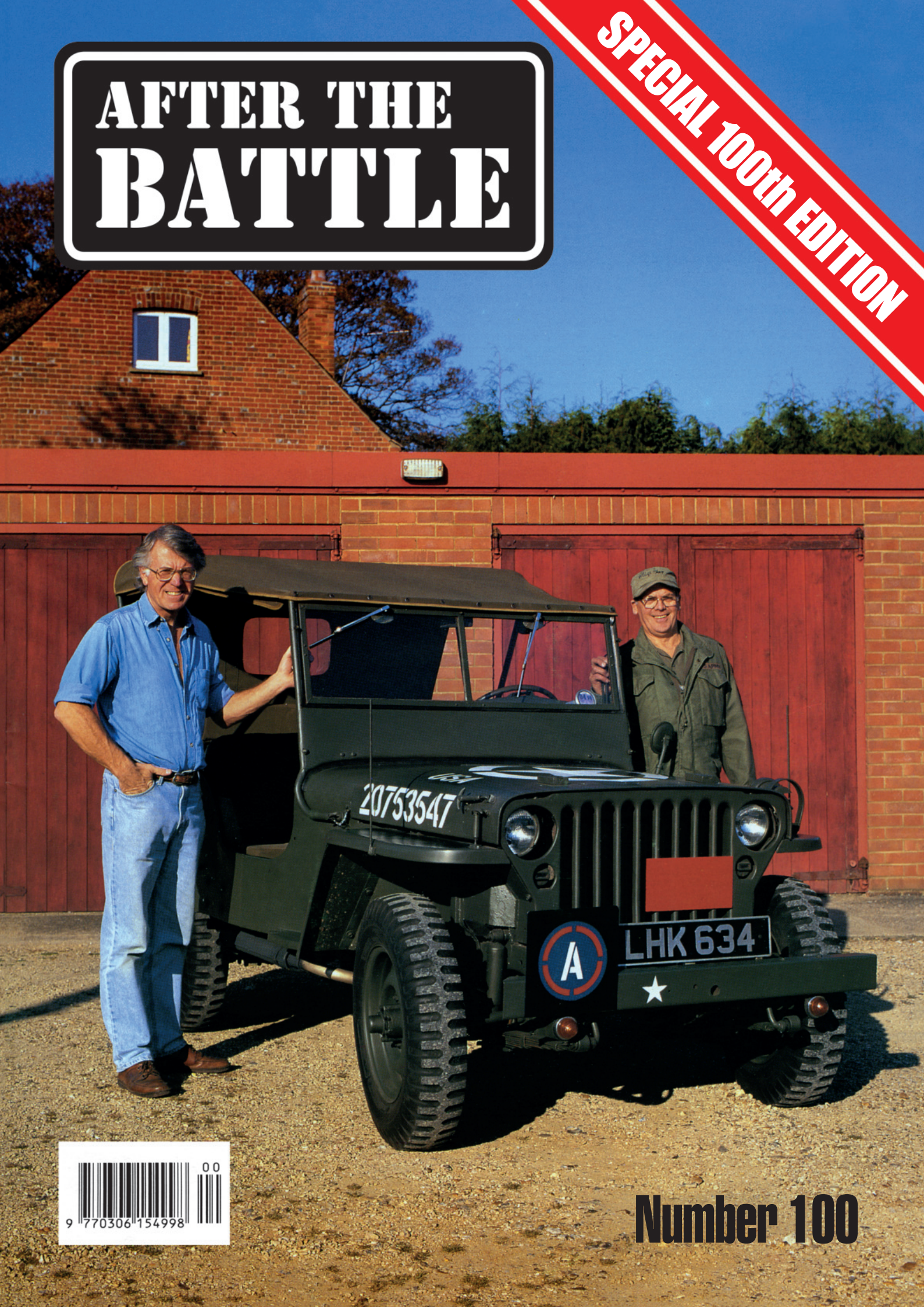
AFTER THE BATTLE

SPECIAL 100th EDITION



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Front Cover: Flashback to 1973. On the cover of our first issue, we pictured our Jeep (LHK 634) on Omaha Beach; 25 years later, your Editor had a nostalgic reunion with the old girl, since beautifully restored by Alan Holland.

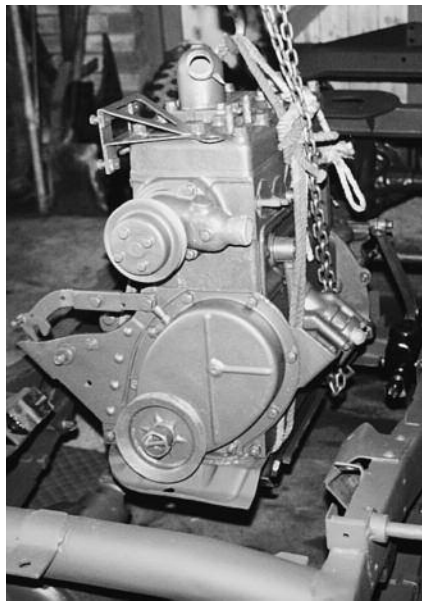
Back Cover: Sun . . . Sea . . . and a Jeep. As it was at the time *After the Battle* was conceived.

Photo Credits:
Bob Bird: 35 top, bottom left, bottom right.
Channel Islands Occupation Society: 47 bottom left.
Daily Telegraph: 68 bottom.
Dave Bishop: 47 top.
David C. Kelly: 69 bottom.
Deryk G. Wills: 66 bottom.
Express Newspapers: 13 top.
Flight: 32 top.
Fox Photos: 3 top.
IWM: 4 centre; 18 top, centre left, bottom left; 21 bottom; 29 top left, centre; 38 bottom left; 51 bottom; 52 top left; 70 top.
Jersey Evening Post: 47 top centre left, top centre right, bottom centre right.
Manfred Braünlich: 55 bottom.
Newsquest (North London): 51 top.
North News & Pictures: 41 top.
RAF Waddington: 12 centre.
Richard Perchard: 47 bottom right.

SPECIAL
100th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
WITH EXTRA 16 PAGES

In 1973, I purchased a Willys Jeep from Lawrence Brooks of Old Heathfield with the intention of taking it to Normandy in June that year. I had a vague idea of seeing if it was possible to picture it in the same locations as Jeeps which appeared in wartime photographs . . . but nothing more. The vehicle had been first registered to Prop Cars Ltd in May 1946 and I was told it had featured in several films including *Patton — Lust for Glory* (see issue 7). The trip turned out to be a mechanical nightmare with frequent breakdowns and it was only because I had the expertise of my lifelong friend, Chris Stevens, that we were able to complete the tour from Le Havre to Cherbourg. We had frequent stops for water and to strip the carburettor, and on one occasion, when I had ventured onto Omaha Beach (see rear cover), it refused to start and we nearly lost it to the incoming tide! By then, I had the glimmer of an idea for a magazine which would show what the battlefields were like today so, once we had backed it up the beach, I took a picture of the Jeep to use on the front cover.

Soon after returning home, I purchased a second Jeep (pictured on the cover of our *Historic Military Vehicles Directory* and back cover of issue 6) from Dave Gunn of Ilford and then disposed of the troublesome LHK 634 to Sheila Jenner. (Later, when I met her on one of Peter Gray's tours, she castigated me for selling her a pup. Sorry Sheila, do you forgive me? After all, everything's fair in love, war and selling motor cars!) In April 1995, it came into the ownership of Alan Holland of Lane End in Buckinghamshire, who lovingly stripped it to its chassis, replacing many worn and broken parts. At the time, he had no idea that it had been featured on the cover of *After the Battle* and it was only when he bought some back issues of Purnell's Second World War part-work that one of our early advertising leaflets dropped out. On the miniature reproduction of the cover, he could just make out the registration and Alan telephoned me excitedly in September 1997. Immediately, I knew I had solved the problem of what to put on the cover of this special issue — a 'then and now' 25 years later!



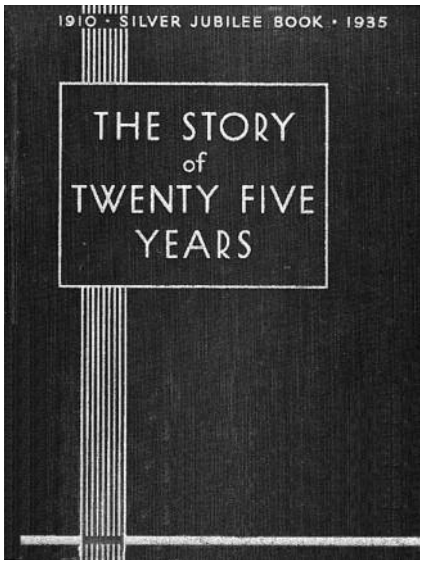
From the Editor . . .

The pictures which set me off on the I-wonder-what-it-looks-like-now trail back in the 1950s. In 1911, Winston Churchill was the Home Secretary, this well-known picture of him being taken during the Siege of Sidney Street in East London.

Welcome to this enlarged milestone edition of *After the Battle.* Over the past 25 years, many people have asked me how my interest in the Second World War evolved and what were the circumstances which led me to create 'ATB'. So here goes.

Our lives are shaped by many events and experiences, particularly during our 'formative' years and two things stick out in my memory. The first was that while I was still at school I wanted to visit the scene of the Siege of Sidney Street (in Whitechapel in East London) to see what No. 100 looked like. The fact that a six-hour battle, between the army and police against two, or maybe three, anarchists, had taken place in an ordinary street in the East End in January 1911 had captured my imagination after reading about it in the 1935 Silver Jubilee publication *25 Years,* and I took the book along with me one day in the school holidays — it must have been around 1954-55. Then, the house was still standing but I remember being disappointed not to find it covered with bullet holes. (It was demolished in 1956 — see our latest book, *The East End Then and Now.)*

Little did I know then that some 40 years after my schoolboy visit to Sidney Street, I would be standing in my namesake's place on the exact anniversary of the siege in 1997. From *The East End Then and Now,* page 258.



B.6723. The Germans left snipers in the town. Here a British soldier is seen covering a point suspected of sheltering one of them. 9.7.44.
B.6724. A British soldier talking to a French youth, Rene Tiby, who was forced to work for the Germans despite only having one hand. 9.7.44.
CAEN CENTRE

In 1973, when I decided to visit Normandy with the Jeep, I contacted the Imperial War Museum at Lambeth, London, to choose some wartime pictures to match up. However, I had left it much too late to order prints as the delivery time in those days was several weeks. Generously, Ted Hine, the photo curator, came to my rescue and said I could come in and copy some of the album pages, which I did with my mother's camera on the window shelf, hence the shadow on this print *(left)*. **Without a close-up lens, the resulting pictures were barely more than an inch square which didn't help us in identifying the location where each had been taken.** *Right*: **That's me on the left holding the same print on a street in Caen. (Ted Hine's staff were invaluable as my knowlege at that time was very basic and I pay tribute to the help given to me in those days by Jeff Pavey (who managed to 'charm' my anorak off my back!); Mike Willis, long-time friend of Rose Coombs, with whom I worked on our first book** ***Before Endeavours Fade*** **in 1976, and Alan Williams of motorbike fame.)**

The second influence on me was, as I outlined in my editorial in issue 25, the BBC television series of 1959 in which war correspondents returned to the battlefields. Unfortunately, the BBC tell me that they no longer hold a copy of the *After the Battle* programmes but I can distinctly remember one scene where the wartime film merged into the scene today. The 'then and now' aspect held me enthralled but it was not until 1973 that I actually went to France to try to see if it was possible to find and match up pictures taken during the war. I pinched the name and the rest, as they say, is history!

The idea of a return visit to Normandy to coincide with the anniversary of D-Day — June 6 — had taken shape the month before. What was to make this trip special was the decision to travel in a wartime-vintage Willys Jeep, restored to its former glory after several months hard work, which I hoped I could photograph in the locations of the 1944 invasion. Several dozen pictures had been obtained from the Imperial War Museum in London and I wondered, in spite of the vague captioning, if one could still find the locations and, using our Jeep as 'set dressing', take 'then and now' comparison photographs.

Prior to this trip I had always been just a holiday snapshot photographer using an Agfa Isolette III, purchased second-hand 15 years previously for £10. I wanted to make up a special album of the trip so I borrowed a 35mm Mamiya. This was my first experience with an SLR camera and the built-in light meter seemed the ultimate in sophistication after always having taken photographs by following the film instruction leaflet for 'cloudy bright' or 'cloudy dull'!

During the trip it was evident that it was possible — with effort — to find the wartime locations and from this developed the germination of an idea for a new magazine about the Second World War based on the theme of comparison photographs. What made it possible was the fact that since 1958 I had been running the family printing business, so I felt that I could justify the time spent on research because it was helping to fill machine time on the presses.

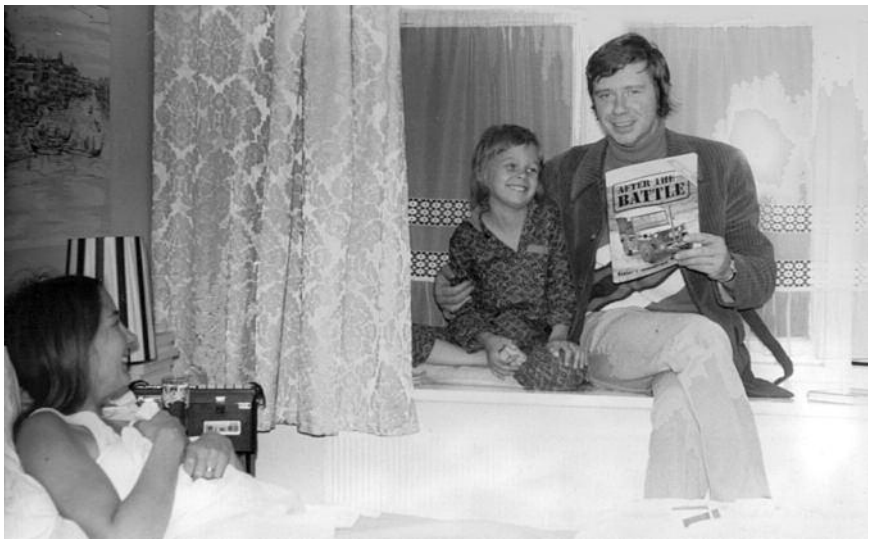
However, my aspirations were quickly dashed when the enprints were returned from the chemist. To my horror I saw that my absolute reliance on the meter in against-the-light, dull or rainy conditions had produced poor-quality photographs, acceptable as snapshots but totally unsuitable for reproduction.

Below: **Chris Stevens seeking out another comparison, this time in Bretteville l'Orgueilleuse** *(above)*. **This was one of the shots which was of good enough quality to be used in issue 1 (page 28). Back-up Mini driven by my wife Jennifer on the right.**

Nevertheless, with the 'bit between the teeth', the idea of abandoning the magazine project never entered my head. Following the advice of a friend, I splashed out £106 on a Minolta SRT 101 with the 55mm 1.7 Rokkor lens to retake the pictures. Using a Mini, we raced round the locations from Cherbourg to Le Havre, luckily now being able to drive straight to each spot, and I retook in two days what had taken ten days on our first trip. This was a stop-click, whistle-stop tour but the advice of my photographer friend to take several exposures of each view, altering the stop each time, was a new experience (and expense)!

This shot of the Jeep in La Délivrande (I spelt it wrong in issue 1) came out too bad to be used. Fortunately, I had an alternative angle which was included on page 29.

Right: **We were so thrilled to get our first edition off the press and Chris came round to celebrate but Jennifer was ill in bed. Nevertheless, we got together in her bedroom for this shot. However, Chris had his own interests to look after and from issue 2 I had to go it alone. Some time later, I gave Chris a poser to find the location of the picture on page 46 of issue 14. Billy Wright (on the right) gave him the clue and we went out to take the comparison in 1976.**



B.6963. Cpl. Lees, Sgt. Kershaw and Warrant Officer Class 2 Paralow. 11.7.44.
B.6965. Some of our troops interested in a village store in CULLY. 11.7.44.

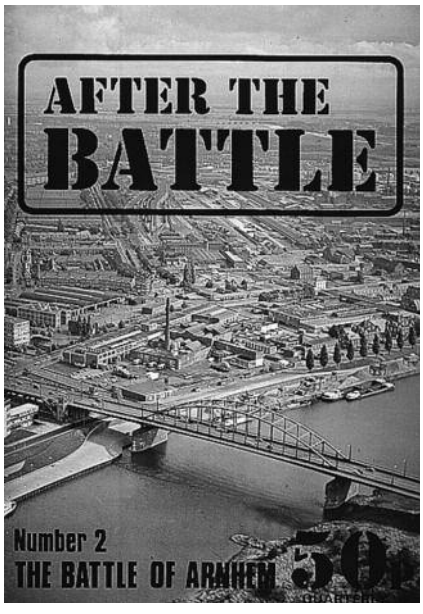
Chris with our future Deputy Editor on the left, then aged eight. On subsequent visits, I needed to take Jennifer with me to read the map, so Gordon had to come along as well. Tax inspectors are adverse to allowing expenses for taking one's wife on a business trip but I convinced him that I couldn't drive, read the map, do the research, take the photographs, etc, etc. However, it was unheard of to get expenses for an eight-year-old child but I achieved the impossible by saying that I needed him to stand in the pictures which is why he appears in many of the early issues — to convince a British taxman!

I finished the trip with a flight over the battlefield with the thought that some aerial shots would be valuable to illustrate certain points of the story. Again, my lack of experience showed itself when the prints were developed; the combination of a low-wing monoplane, filming through the plastic window and the small-format 35mm negative was not the ideal way to take good aerial obliques!

In all the bustle and excitement I had overlooked the cover, which required a colour photograph, correctly balanced to accommodate the heading. The one roll of colour prints I had taken on French Kodak film was examined and one possible picture was selected which in those days had to be converted to a transparency with additional loss of sharpness. Finally, our first issue appeared in August 1973, to quite a clamour of excitement.

I then realised that if we were to keep to the programme envisaged of quarterly publication, I would not only have to be able to take professional-quality photographs but learn how to do so overnight. Expert advice suggested the use of Ilford FP4 as a good all-round film which was not too fast and the excitement of opening my first five-roll Professional Pack was really something. Ektachrome was recommended for the colour photography as it could be processed by professional laboratories within hours if necessary. Then, with the need for a larger format than the 35mm to give a quality transparency for the cover, I decided to try 120-size Ektachrome in my old Agfa.

The cover for issue 2 exceeded my wildest expectations, for although I was worried at



From the grainy result of my first cover depicting the Jeep in Normandy, I was very pleased with the result on issue 2, although I remember being very worried at the time, having made a special trip to Arnhem to hire an aircraft to take this one photo.

the time that this aerial shot of Arnhem bridge had been taken following a rain squall, I learned subsequently that the best time to take aerial photographs is after the air has been washed by rain.

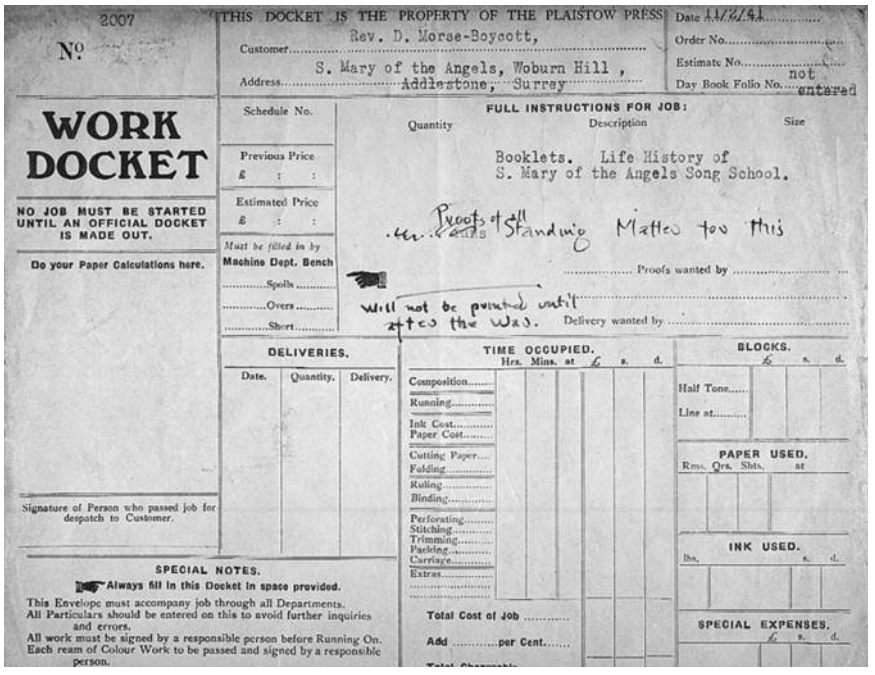
With no idea of what speed to use, 1/250th was selected being the fastest possible on that camera. Still lacking a light-meter, I took three rolls of film while the pilot circled the bridge at a dangerously low level. During this time, the stop setting was altered from f5.6 to f32 and it was surprising how little this affected the final result.

The first four issues of *After the Battle* were designed by Alan Hall, who was then working with me at Plaistow as Editor of *Aviation News*. Despite Alan's dedication for hard work — several times he worked through the night to get an issue out — *Aviation News* was losing money and, being fortnightly, at an alarming rate. After sticking with mounting losses for two years, I had to tell Alan we could no longer afford to publish his baby and sadly we parted company. Never having designed anything before, I therefore had to grasp the nettle myself. It proved impossible to get to grips with creative work in the office (I was trying to run Plaistow Press at the same time), so I had to decide to do the layout at home which I have continued to do for the past 25 years. However, there was no convenient space downstairs, so I retreated to the loft! This looks like putting the Malta issue together in 1975.

In the following three issues, the weather played an important part as all the photography had to be done during the winter of 1973/74. During my snapshot days, I had only taken pictures on sunny days; now I had to cope with snowstorms and bad light. Fog was worse. In the Ardennes, which we were trying to photograph at the same time that the attack occurred but 29 years later, it was soon obvious why Hitler had chosen that time of year for his last offensive, and for the first three days of our trip, we could not take a single picture. Fog was also a problem with the Ruhr Dams and, during the production of issues 3, 4 and 5, all the locations had to be visited twice to retake unusable pictures.

My worst problem was to arrive at a village and work out where the army photographer had stood only to find the sun directly in my face. Under these conditions, although I would take several exposures of each shot, the pictures mostly had to be rejected and retaken as I was determined to try to set a high standard.

Some years later, Derek Trayler joined Plaistow Press as a camera operator and he had a penchant for recaptioning my photographs and putting a copy on the notice board. I used this picture in *The Blitz Then and Now* Volume 3 (page 341) but Derek immediately saw the significance because Hauptmann Kurt Seyfarth of KG2 could almost be targeting our wartime factory on Plaistow Road!



2007

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IT HURTS US MORE THAN IT HURTS YOU

GOOD FRIENDS, Paper is scarce and has gone up in price. Henceforth your ration will cost you a little more, but we shall keep it as low as possible.

Do not blame us, dear friends, blame That Man.

I have few records from the wartime period when the firm was being run by my grandfather, William J. with the help and support of his secretary, Margery, but I found this amongst his papers. St Mary of the Angels Song School had been evacuated from Somers Town (near King's Cross). Margery would have typed the docket *(left)* in 1941 but my grandfather has written that it 'will not be printed until after the war'. Paper was rationed and in short supply as his postcard *(right)* indicates.

By issue 5, I had realised that I needed a wider-angle lens to match the field of view in the wartime photographs so I purchased a second-hand 35mm lens for the Minolta. This seemed to approximate closest the angles produced in the photographs we were trying to match. Also for that issue, I decided there would have to be some improvement in the quality of the aerial photographs, necessary to illustrate some battles, and was advised that the big Pentax 6x7 would be the best choice as the large negative would enable photographs to be blown up to double-page spreads. With the impressive hand-grip, and eye-level viewfinder, this camera was ideally suited to taking photographs in the slipstream of an aircraft. I had already vowed not to photograph through plastic windows again although on two subsequent occasions the only aircraft available had enclosed cockpits. Luckily at Eben-Emael in Belgium, we found a 1944-vintage Piper Cub — the excellent liaison and spotter planes used in the war which have an enormous double door which hinges up and down on the right-hand side giving an unobstructed view of the ground. However, this large opening also produces a blasting slipstream and, whilst over Falaise in a similar aircraft recreating the attack on Rommel's staff car in July 1944, my glasses were whipped from my face. I was soon violently sick and for the remainder of the flight had to photograph blind. (I now tie my glasses on securely!)

The choice of cover themes varied with each issue, depending on the best 'after the battle' scene discovered in each location. Composition of the cover was something else I had to learn as the subject had to be in the lower two-thirds to allow for the magazine title which could only be printed over a light background or sky to give it prominence. I also wanted to try to avoid including modern houses or buildings so had to compromise each picture between the different factors. In the case of the Sherman tank on the cover of issue 4, power lines were visible but not objectionable. The bomb-proof dome at Wizernes provided a rather unspectacular cover for issue 6 and the gateway of the Villa Belmonte at Mezzegra in northern Italy was used for issue 7, but not without misgivings as it has not really been proved that Mussolini was shot there. One of the best covers, in my view, must be No. 8 where a wrecked Tiger tank was found lying beside the road near Vimoutiers, France, a perfect subject to illustrate the battle of the Falaise Pocket. Several rolls of film were exposed using both the old Agfa and the Pentax. However the 6x7 transparencies could not equal the depth of field of the Agfa, although colour rendering and sharpness were unequalled, and it was an Agfa transparency which was chosen in the end.

With each issue, the old adage of learning by your mistakes has been the fastest teacher. *After the Battle* proved to be a huge challenge. Some locations have been found easily; others have taken hours or even days to locate. I have to admit to achieving much personal satisfaction in tracing historically significant locations in our recent history. The feeling of actually standing on some piece of ground where long-forgotten photographers once recorded battle scenes can be imagined, be it the exact spot in Belgium where some of Skorzeny's Commandos were executed (issue 4 and page 66); or where Montgomery signed the surrender (issue 48) or Himmler committed suicide (issues 14 & 17).

'Congratulations to one of our boys', wrote my grandfather on a reprint he made of Richard Williams' citation for the Military Medal, 'we are proud of you'. Dick, an apprentice with Plaistow Press, was called up to serve his country in February 1942. My Grandad Bill wrote that 'while with us he was a quiet and reliable lad in our Composing Department. His conscientious demeanour at all times made him a favourite with all his colleagues who join in congratulating him on his honour.' Citation: 'Fusilier Richard Williams, of 39 Southern Road, Plaistow, has received the immediate award of the Military Medal for gallantry at Anzio, where he has served with a battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. During the bitter fighting at the bridgehead earlier this year, when the enemy made tremendous efforts to break through, Fus. Williams was working as a medical orderly in the regimental aid post. A report was received that a casualty was lying in an exposed area and, as no stretcher bearers were at hand to deal with the case, Fus. Williams went out himself. As he left the aid post an intense mortar bombardment came down on the area through which he had to pass. Without hesitation he went straight through the smoke and dust caused by the explosions and reached the wounded man. He dressed his wounds under fire, administered morphia and returned for assistance to carry in the casualty. This was done. Later, when the normal road for evacuation could not be used, he reconnoitred an alternative route and guided a party of stretcher bearers along it. Throughout the eighteen days that the battalion was in the line, Fus. Williams repeatedly went out to dangerous areas to assist with casualties. In each case he returned with a casualty. His courage, cheerfulness and resource in most adverse conditions were a source of admiration and praise from all his comrades and of great assistance to the morale of the battalion.'

So what is the comparison picture that I have been most pleased to have found? I think it has to be that on the centre pages of issue 84. Not only is the picture of the 'Overlord' commanders important in its own right but it has been miscaptioned many times over the years. It was also a picture which took a lot of effort to pinpoint because Norfolk House was gutted in the 1980s in the course of modernisation.

First, I had to establish that the sequence was taken there and not — as some authors maintain — at Southwick House, Portsmouth. This in itself was not particularly difficult as I found the original 'dope' sheet for the photo call to picture the D-Day commanders filed at the Imperial War Museum.

However, when I contacted the present owners of Norfolk House, they dismissed my enquiry saying that the whole interior had been rebuilt. I explained that it did not matter what changes had taken place as the spot where the picture had been taken still existed even if it bore no resemblance to the original. So I backtracked to the architects who let me rummage in their basement archive where I discovered an original set of plans dating from the days when the building had been the headquarters of the British Aluminium Company. One of the drawings showed the position of the boardroom which General Eisenhower's letter (see issue 84) confirmed had been used for planning the invasion of Europe.

Armed with the drawing, I made contact with the present tenants of the sixth floor — Lamco Paper Sales. Once in the office, everything fell into place as one could see where the windows — still the original ones as the facade of Norfolk House had been retained — had been hung with black-out curtains either side of the panelled pillar behind the map.

The young girl in my comparison was not all that interested when I explained what had taken place on this spot. 'Eisenhower sat right here', I told her. Her reply left me speechless: 'Is he a pop star?'

Another problem with comparison photography is that sometimes one is no longer able to stand on the same spot from where the wartime picture was taken. Too many times, the building used as a vantage point has been demolished or a new building has replaced a ruin. Trees and hoardings often mar the view and sometimes new developments completely expunge the old location. Nevertheless, as I have said to many people who tell me that a site no longer exists, it *is* still there but it just takes more care to determine the correct spot. Overlaying old and new maps is one method we have had to adopt where no significant features remain. Aerial photographs can help, or sometimes a combination of the two, viz, the tent city at Greenham Common in issue 85 or, more significantly, to pinpoint Eisenhower's CP, at Southwick for *D-Day Then and Now*.

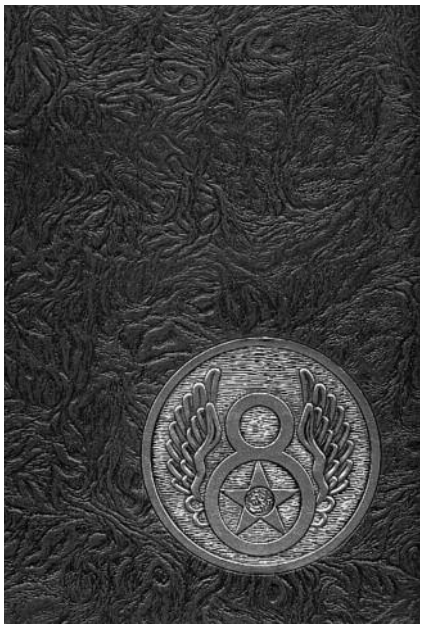
'Eisenhower sat here', I told the young girl with all due reverence. 'Is he a pop star?', she replied. How sad the mighty are fallen.

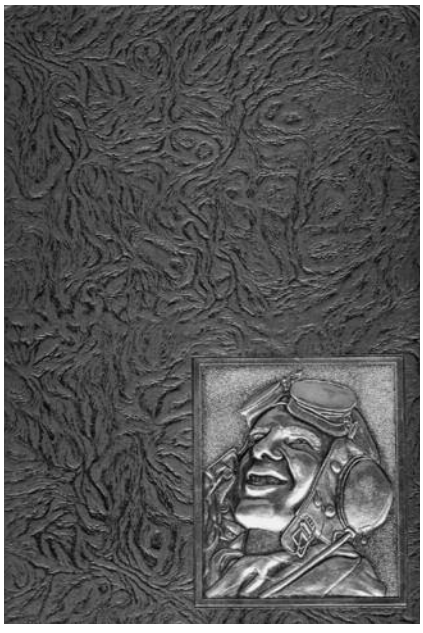
The weather has always had a significant effect on the production of *After the Battle*. Initially, I had the idea of always trying to visit sites at the same time of year that the actual battle or incident had taken place but this turned out to be a folly as my trip to the Ardennes in December 1974 proved. Not only were we fog-bound for several days but searching for comparisons in the freezing cold was a trifle miserable. Although one could just about manage under an umbrella during rain, the resulting negatives were often far from satisfactory, and falling snow ruined pictures with smeared snowflakes. Nevertheless, because in some stories one needed to see through trees (like at Waltham Abbey in issue 93), it was still necessary to plan to take some pictures in wintertime. Karel Margry — our European Editor who joined us in 1992 — had to make this decision when visiting Katyn Wood (issue 92) but, having been assured that snow never fell in this part of Russia until late November, it came one day before his visit!

Aerial photography is even more affected by the weather where summer haze is a major problem. As I have explained, the best pictures are taken after the air has been 'washed' by rain but when one often has to book an aircraft or air traffic control slot some days ahead, we have often just had to take pot luck. We were extremely fortunate on our long flight around East Anglia in 1978 for *Airfields of the Eighth Then and Now* but came up against a lot of adverse weather during the flights for Roger's follow-up *Airfields of the Ninth* in 1993, cloud actually blowing into the open window at one point. With aerial photographs, the time of year — even of the day — is also important if one wants to highlight features on the ground. We achieved this for *Before Endeavours Fade* in 1976, where ploughed fields still showed the trench lines, and for *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* in 1979, when long-obliterated markings on landing grounds, like for example those at Hawkinge aerodrome, sometimes became visible.

Thus, I was most impressed when Philip M. Vorwald of Waterloo, in Belgium, wrote to me in June 1997 to tell me he had rematched every picture in *The Battle of the Bulge Then and Now* and had even strived to get 'weather matches'! His work must stand supreme in the annals of 'After the Battle' photography and I was pleased to be able to reproduce some of the best of his photographs in our last issue.

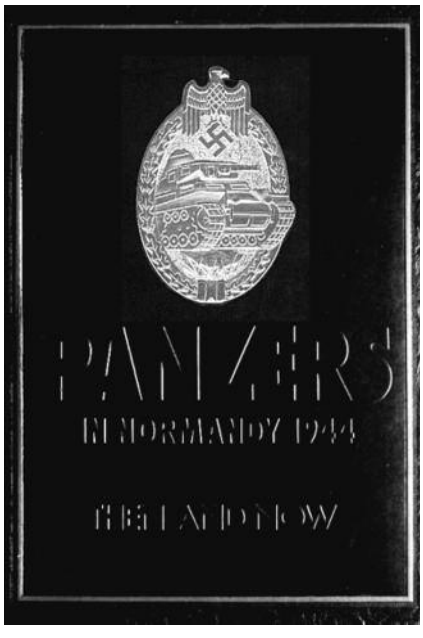
Comparison in Munich — unusable because our visit coincided with a snowstorm. On many occasions, we have had to return to a location but, even then, there would be no guarantee that the weather would be kinder. Sometimes a trip has been made to take just one photograph. The record for the ultimate effort is probably held by the photograph of Lieutenant Bromhead's grave on page 69 of *The Zulu War Then and Now*. Our Indian photographer had to take a three-day train ride to reach the New Cantonment Cemetery at Allahabad . . . but I seem to recall that his bill for the whole exercise was only £69!

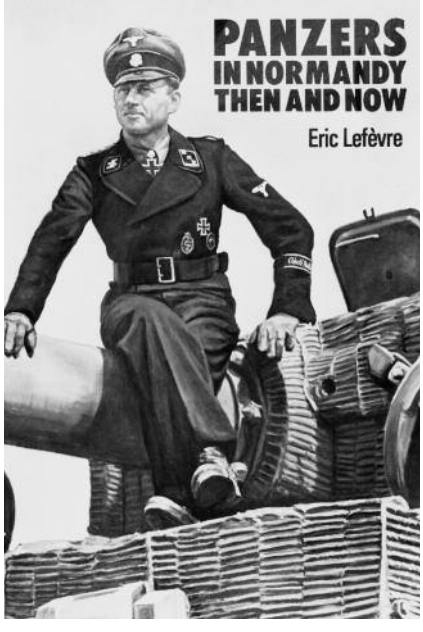




Our artist George Campbell *(centre),* **who has painted the illustrations for the dust-jackets for all our books, is my step-father and his painting of Pilot Officer Keith Gillman must be one of his masterpieces. I had originaly intended the cover of *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* to have an embossed metallic impression of Gillman** *(right),* **a typical feature of American `yearbooks' which I had originaly used on the special presentation edition** *(left)* **of *Airfields of the Eighth Then and Now.* I had contracted the Taylor Publishing Company of Dallas, Texas, to do the work but the die-maker had great difficulty in reproducing a faithful likeness of Gillman and, in spite of several attempts, his mouth continued to have a kind of snarl. In the end, I gave up but George came to my rescue. At the instigation of Wilf Nicoll, my ex-policeman friend who was helping me with the book, George was producing in secret a portrait of Gillman for my 40th birthday in April 1980. When I saw it, I knew I had found the answer to my increasing worries over the problems with the American die. *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* has probably been our most successful title having been reprinted six times to date.**

A number of unpleasant tasks have befallen me, one of the worst being when I received an irate telephone call in 1980: 'You have put my brother on the cover of your book *[Battle of Britain Then and Now],* but have identified him as someone else.'
Having conducted detailed research on the sequence of Fox photographs taken at Hawkinge in May 1940, and identified everyone with the help of Roy Humphries (the author of that particular chapter), and having had the identities confirmed by Peter Brothers who appears in the group shot, there was no doubt in my mind that the pilot featured in the painting on the book cover, based on one of the photographs, was Keith Gillman.
The caller explained how his mother was so proud of the photograph, which had been published in *Picture Post* during the war, of her son, Flying Officer Michael Doulton, killed on August 31, 1940. It broke my heart to have to demolish this belief and explain that she had been under a misapprehension all these years.





I tried the idea of the metallic die once more in 1983 for *Panzers in Normandy Then and Now,* and this time the die-maker in the States produced a beautiful rendering of the German tankers' badge — the Panzerkampfabzeichen. However, by then the exchange rate had made the importation of the covers too costly, so this is the only proof copy in existence. Anyway, I think that the painting of Wittmann on the cover was more striking and particularly relevant since Jean Paul's research had led to the discovery of the lost field grave of the Panzer ace (issue 48). Jean Paul Pallud first telephoned me out of the blue with very poor English back in 1978 to offer me a story on an SOE mission near his home in Annecy (Operation `Pimento' in issue 26). As readers will be aware, 'JP', seen above with the Deputy Editor having just found a comparison, went on to make a name for himself with *The Battle of the Bulge Then and Now* and the funniest story happened when we were viewing cine film with Roger Bell at the Imperial War Museum. JP was rewinding a spool at speed when the roll suddenly snapped. 'Jesus' (he pronounced it 'Yesus'), he cried, jumping up almost in a renactment of Our Lord being resurrected from the dead!

In more recent years, sadly I had to destroy another long-held belief by Denis Sweeting that he and his Typhoon squadron had contributed significantly in the early hours of D-Day. His squadron, No. 198, was detailed to knock out the chateau HQ of General Marcks near St Lô (see *D-Day Then and Now,* page 619).
Having successfully found and rocketed the chateau, Denis could not believe it when I told him — following our on-the-spot research in Normandy in May 1995 — that they had attacked the wrong château! I tried explaining that it was not his fault; that the squadron had been detailed to attack another château six kilometers away because intelligence had misidentified the one being used by LXXXIV. Armeekorps; but it left a bad taste in the mouth. Even worse, Denis died just a few months later, in April 1996.
Along the way, I have lost two dear friends who had helped and supported me in my early efforts. I first befriended Christopher Stevens at school when I was 11 and we remained lifelong buddies. When I proposed taking a restored Jeep to Normandy for the anniversary of D-Day in 1973, Chris jumped at the chance to accompany me and he

Me with Chris Stevens outside the Citadel at St Malo (issue 33). I dedicated issue 65 to his memory.

Sadly, Chris Stevens, died in 1989, aged 49, poignantly for me on July 10, the first day of the Battle of Britain which Wilf Nicoll had helped me research in 1979-80. Wilf, a Scotsman, had served in the RAF and after the war in the Metropolitan Police in the East End of London and later at Loughton where he manned the first beat police office at Debden. From 1976, when I first met him when researching the crash of the Polish Hurricane in issue 13, to the day he died suddenly in 1982 (on my wedding annniversary), we spent many hours in each other's company producing first *Airfields of the Eighth Then and Now* and then *'BOBTAN'* as he called it. Our next project together was to be the Blitz for which Wilf was to have written all the captions, and I have to admit it was an awful task to have to produce those three volumes without him.
I worked constantly on *The Blitz Then and Now* from 1987 to 1990 but, as I wrote in the blurb, from conception to completion it took nearly ten years — longer than the period of history it set out to tell. This is partly why I chose to include the names of everyone at the press who had worked on it — much like film credits do today — for in no other books

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON THE EVE OF REMEMBRANCE DAY

The blood-soaked fields of Europe
Lie quiet beneath the stars
Where the myriad dead lied buried
From Europe's countless wars.
From the icy peaks of Norway
To the sun-drenched hills of Spain
From the beaches of France
To the Steppes of Demyansk
Lie the legions of the slain.

The poilus rot in their thousands
'Neath the scarred earth of Verdun
And at Mons and Ypres and Passchendaele
Has the blood of millions run.
From the Menin Gate to Belleau Wood
From the Argonne to Champagne
The bones of armies run to dust
By the Marne and the Somme and the Aisne.

From the steaming Burmese jungle
To the frozen Artic sea
From the arid wastes of Africa
To the orchards of Normandy
In the air, on the land and the ocean
They fought and they fell and they died
For their countries' cause? For their loved ones at home?
Or a politician's pride?

The God of Battles stretches out
His scarred and blood-stained hands
And sifts the dead through his fingers
Like countless grains of sand.
But he knows each one of the fallen
Each number, rank and name
And he looks to the future's unknown wars
For he knows there are more to claim

While governments scheme and senates plot
To sway the field of power.
Then men will have to shoulder the gun
And face their testing hour
But maybe soon will come the time
When one voice cries 'No more!'
And that voice will be heard around the Earth
As a loud and defiant roar.

Then the phantom troops that roam the World
Will drift and fade away
Like the morning mist in the eye of the sun
At the start of the new born day.
They will find their rest these restless shades
When the bugles and drums are stilled
And war is banned from the Planet's face
And God's peace be fulfilled

WILF NICOLL, 1978

proved expert at identifying the various locations, as well as stripping down the carburettor every few miles to keep us going.
Without Chris's support on that first trip, possibly the magazine would not have happened. He helped me produce several other stories — you can see him on pages 42-43 of issue 2 when we visited the Royal Small Arms Pattern Room at Enfield (since moved to Nottingham) — and he spent a week with Peter Gray and myself in France during the abortive recovery of the AVRE at Graye-sur-Mer (issue 15). I tried to write the story as sympathetically as possible towards the Army but it was a real balls-up. Now living in France, Peter wrote to me recently (in November 1996) reminding me of that week: 'The story I most enjoy telling is the coverage of the Churchill at Graye for I considered it a great honour to have been invited by you and it was a real chapter of disasters for those poor chaps from the Army who tried to recover it with quite inadequate kit. I often see Pinguely cranes and earthmoving equipment going around. That was the firm who loaned their 60-ton crane from Caen. I had to hire one last year to lift a shunting engine onto the track.'

With Wilf Nicoll at the launch of *The Battle of Britain Then and Now.*

have I ever seen due credit given to those who actually labour behind the scenes to print it.
One last tale worth telling regarding Chris occurred on his father's farm at Enfield but before I tell the story you must remember that we were young tearaways in those days. In 1968, I found out that Skeeter Mk12 helicopters were being sold off by the Ministry for £100 each. Chris and I could not believe it and I quickly sent off a cheque. The machine we were assigned, XL765, had served with No. 651 Squadron (Army Air Corps) at Debden in 1959 and in 1963 had been transferred to No. 654 Squadron at Hildesheim, Germany, before ending its days with No. 17 Flight of No. 1 Wing, AAC.
We had it collected in August 1968 and dropped off at Chris's farm. Having obtained a technical manual on the Skeeter and a Pitman paperback on *How a Helicopter Flies,* we set about trying to get the engine started. This was easier said than done as there were no plugs, no battery, and the cartridge starter was u/s. Having wangled the first two out of the RAF, we then tried giving it a 'tow' start using a rope wound around the external flywheel tied to the back of a car! When this

`Skeeter helicopters £100 each.' In 1968, when Chris and I heard that ex-Army Air Corps machines were being sold off, we could not believe our ears. I went to No.15 MU at RAF Wroughton *(left)* **to choose one and had it delivered to Chris's father's farm at Enfield in August that year** *(right)*. **For the next four months we laboured to get the engine going, overcoming such minor problems as no battery, no sparking plugs, etc. Finally the big day arrived: Sunday, December 1.**

method failed, I turned to my brother-in-law who managed to get the Coffman starter repaired for free. Consequently, Chris and I felt duty-bound to include him in our team as we tried to overcome all the obstacles. Meanwhile, winter had set in and the two-ton Skeeter was slowly sinking into the mud.

Finally, the great day arrived. We had obtained some engine starter cartridges, charged the 24-volt battery and obtained the right octane fuel. Although I had a Private Pilot's Licence, I had never flown a helicopter and knew the dangers of even starting the engine as the rotor had to be cut in within 90 seconds to prevent the thing overheating. Brother-in-law Terry was not so inhibited! Firing all the cartridges in the starter one after the other, with a huge cloud of blue smoke the whole beast shuddered into life. I had the pitch control lever at neutral and the locking nut securely tightened down. As I cut in the rotor we were small boys in our element. All the needles on the instruments were jumping about and judicious use of the throttle sent a bellow across the adjacent golf course.

I had to go home for lunch but I did not have the heart not to let young Terry have a go so I departed leaving him at the controls with a firm admonishment not to touch the pitch lever. Chris — never at home in an aeroplane — was standing a few feet away and saw it all.

I was just finishing my lunch and thinking of returning to the farm when a call came from Chris: 'Terry's crashed the helicopter'. 'No!' I said, 'it's a wind up', not believing him, but when I arrived, there was the Skeeter upside down in the middle of the field with Terry nowhere to be seen.

'What happened?' I demanded of Chris who proceeded to explain. Near as I can remember these were his words:

'Terry was trying to get the helicopter taxying but because it had sunk in the ground, he was revving the engine in bursts like one does to free a bogged motor. Then he tried to lighten the load by moving the rotor lever. All of a sudden, the thing shot out of the ground and the tail swung round making matchwood of the fence. Terry went down the field like a blackbird, hopping up and down. He then got a swing on it which gradually became worse until it piled in upside down. The rotors broke off but the drive shaft was still boring into the ground. I ran down the field but fortunately, Terry had put on the harness so he was just hanging there upside down. He managed to reach the switches and turn the engine off.'

I was livid when I heard what had happened because of all the effort we had put into getting the Skeeter and I stormed round to Terry to demand a cheque for £100. When I subsequently advertised the wreck in the *Exchange & Mart* as 'one crashed helicopter' the phone never stopped ringing, but the punch line came several years later when one of the aviation magazines carried an article on the Skeeter and listed all the survivors. There at Leeds University was XL765 described as 'an instructional airframe'!

Although I have told this story many times, it is the first time it has appeared in print and probably solves a mystery in someone's mind as to how that particular Skeeter came a cropper!

When I came to write up this story, I contacted Ken Ellis, the author of *Wrecks and Relics,* to find out if XL765 still existed today. He told me that it was currently at Clapham, Bedfordshire, and being used as a source of spares for Andrew Nowicki's flyable example, G-BLIX (ex-XL809).

Left: **In the terms of sale the ministry stated that the helicopter 'is not to be flown after receipt'. Well, although 'Tearaway' Terry tried, I think we can safely say that it did not fly!** *Right*: **Chris's widow, Sylvia, at the crash site . . . 30 years on.**

'You've had your chips mate!', wrote Wilf Nicholl when he captioned this picture of a Junkers Ju 88 of Stab II/LG1, which ended its days in a field of potatoes and rhubarb at The Jumps, West Tisted, in Hampshire. Wilf commented that 'souvenir hunters have already cut the Swastika from the tail'. . . now we know who they were! It is always a nice postscript when a reader writes in with a personal anecdote.

I am always fascinated to receive letters from readers adding more detail to a particular incident — or, in this case, a photograph — from their own personal involvement. In *The Battle of Britain Then and Now,* I reproduced a picture on page 572 of a Ju 88 down near Petersfield, in Hampshire, on August 15, 1940. Kenneth Webb of Fareham wrote saying that 'the day after, with some of my friends, I cycled to see the two German planes which had crashed just off the A32 near some prehistoric mounds known as "The Jumps". The aircraft had arrived from different directions and had amazingly crashed within 50 yards and five minutes of each other.

'An essential tool in those days was a short length of broken hacksaw blade, with string wound round and round at one end to make a primitive handle. With these, we laboriously cut most of the swastika emblem from the tail which we later cut into handy pieces and distributed them to our friends. I remember having my piece for many years afterwards. The photograph on page 572 shows "our" Junkers some days after it crashed, as the well-trampled ground shows. There were no guards at the time of our visit which was before the photo was taken as the swastika is missing.

'The area around the second plane, which had crashed on the edge of a wood and exploded leaving a large crater, was guarded by Australian soldiers when my father and brother visited the scene later in the evening. There were bits of bodies lying around and hanging in trees and my brother remembers remarking to dad that "he didn't wash his feet" when he saw part of a human foot with dirty toe-nails protruding from the wreckage.'

While on the subject of the Battle of Britain, I cannot recall if I have recounted the story of Jack's Hatch before but it is a good example of how I was once hoisted by my own petard!

During an excursion in Essex, sometime after I had published the book in 1980, I thought I would follow up the crash site of a Polish pilot who had crashed at a place called Jack's Hatch between Epping and Harlow (the entry appears on page 393). As there were no photographs of the crash, I had not visited the spot during the production of the book, so did not know exactly where the aircraft had come down. Reaching the area, the obvious place to make enquiries appeared to be the sole sign of human habitation — the local garage. Fortunately, as it turned out, I had left my copy of the book in the car as I approached the workshop to ask about the crash of a Hurricane in the area. Immediately, I received a torrent of abuse: 'Some chap has produced a book about the Battle of Britain and I am fed up with continually getting people in here', remonstrated the irate attendant. I have to confess that I didn't have the courage to admit that *I* was that person, and I meekly crept away, tail between legs!

Another Battle of Britain sequel occurred in November 1996 when Keith Arnold investigated Sergeant Dennis Noble's Hurricane which crashed on August 30, 1940. As Sergeant Noble was buried in East Retford Cemetery near Newark, close to his home, there was nothing to stop the Ministry granting a licence for the excavation of the wreckage which lay under the pavement in Woodhouse Road, Hove, Sussex. However, two days into the dig, human remains were uncovered indicating that only part of Noble's body was recovered in 1940.

The family were reported to be very distressed at the discovery, but, as I explained to one reader who wrote to me very concerned, the very nature of an air crash means that bodies are smashed to pieces and the thoroughness of wartime recovery was always subject to the dedication, or otherwise, of the Maintenance Unit concerned. With the passing of the years, people tend to forget that when life was cheap, people did not always have the time, or, perhaps, the inclination, to dig for days to recover every scrap. I went on to say that the article on Jean Noizet in issue 94 was a perfect example.

Following the Inquest held at Brighton, which revealed that most of Dennis Noble's remains were still in the cockpit, airmen from RAF Waddington carried out a second interment in the family grave in January 1997.

Fifty-seven years later, Sergeant Dennis Noble is laid to rest in the same grave in which his scant remains were buried in 1940. The whole scenario of the recovery of the bodies of airmen who crashed in the United Kingdom was badly managed by the Air Ministry which failed to institute a thorough search in the immediate aftermath of the war when thousands of servicemen were available to do the job properly.

November 1997. I return to Jack's Hatch where I received my tongue-lashing!

Arlette Gondrée has fought the second battle of Normandy for several years: first to retain control of her parents' renowned cafe and secondly to regain posession of the museum which stands in the garden.

Michael Clodfelter in his two-volume *Warfare and Armed Conflicts* (McFarland, 1993), lists every battle which has taken place anywhere in the world from 1618-1991 — a truly monumental task as he gives detailed descriptions and casualty figures — yet for some undefinable reason, World War II still holds a certain aura within which Normandy probably has pride of place.

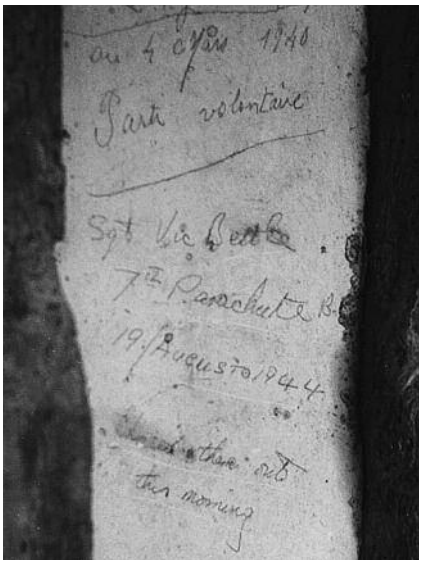
My first effort to cover D-Day in a magazine article in issue 1 back in 1973 appeared to me later as woefully inadequate and my desire to redress the situation was fulfilled with the publication *of D-Day Then and Now* in 1995. However, in the intervening period, many changes had taken place in France, one of the worst in my view being the removal of Pegasus Bridge just months before the veterans were to arrive in Normandy for their 50th pilgrimage. I have already illustrated and commented on this both in the book and in issue 85 (page 11), yet at the time of writing the old bridge still lies rusting and vandalised on the canal bank, its fate still undecided. But at least the darling of the Airborne Forces — Arlette Gondrée — has won her battle to retain the Pegasus Cafe as a living memorial.

Left: **The manor of La Bribourdière in Putot-en-Auge, Normandy, pictured by Claude Vielfaure.** *Right*: **It was in this barn in the grounds that he discovered the inscription** *(below)* **dated 1944 inside the door frame. We have illustrated various wartime inscriptions in past issues but I don't think we have ever had the inscriber come forward to tell his story.**

Subsequently, Claude Vielfaure wrote to me in June 1997 from Paris:

'A couple of years ago, I spent a weekend in a manor house in Normandy owned by friends of mine. During a walk in the estate, I entered in a ruined barn, and I saw on a wall, written with a pencil, this message: "Sgt Vic Bettle, 7th Parachute B, 19/August 1944, We chased them out this morning".

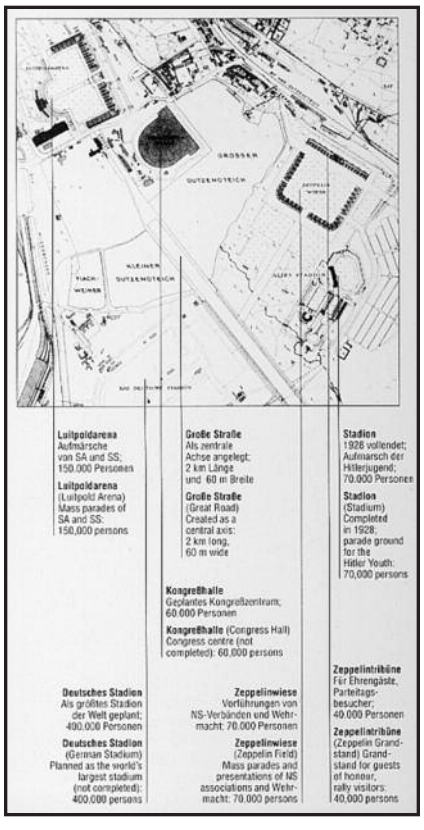
'The house had been occupied by the Germans and badly damaged during the battle in Normandy and, although my friends had lived there since before the war, they had never spotted the inscription. I told my friend Eddy Florentin, the author of many books about the fighting in Normandy (see issue 8) about it and he wrote to General Sir Napier Crookenden, the President of the 6th Airborne veterans' association, asking him if Sergeant Bettle was still alive. Some time later, we were overjoyed to receive this letter: "Dear Claude Vielfaure. I would like to thank you for the photographs of my message left in the barn at 'La Bribourdière' so many years ago. As you can now see I am one of the lucky one's who survived the war

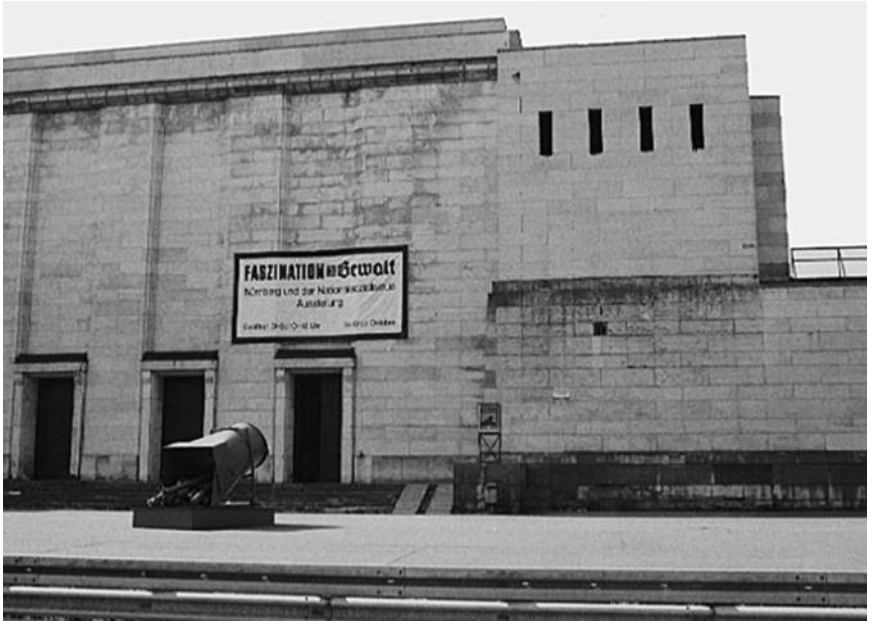


and am still enjoying life. I was one of the parachutists who landed near Port Tournant on 6th June 1944 and relieved the glider men who had captured the bridge, and moved down the road to secure the village and hold the crossroads near the church, where our padre and comrades are buried, until the Commandos arrived from the shore. We remained in defence until the front as established, then moved forward. A list of names as we moved forward I have, but whether they are in the right order I am not sure. Le Porté de Bénouville, Ranville Woods, Bréville, Bois de Bavent, Hauger, Escoville, Putot-en-Auge, Pont-l'Evêque, St Benoît d'Hebertot, Pont-Audemer. As for the message at Putot, I cannot remember being there or writing the message, but we left several of these messages as we went along and then through Belgium and Germany but, as this was the early part of the war, the memory becomes dim. Thank you again for your interest. Sincerely, Vic Bettle. PS. My list of towns passed through are written in pencil too as is my message; then 26 years of age, now 76 years old."'

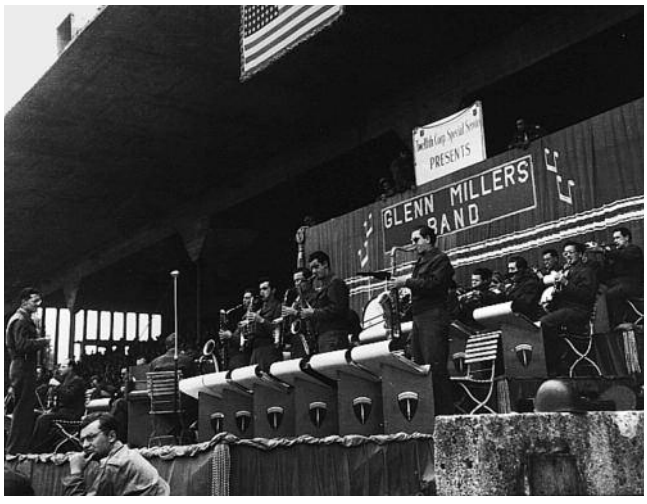
But victory on one battlefield can mean defeat on another. The campaign to save the St Elisabeth Hospital in Arnhem (see issue 2, page 11) was lost in March 1995. Colin Rumford of Wilberfoss, York, pictured it in August 1997 — only the facade will be retained.

Another early feature covered the British government's hugely comprehensive collection of firearms stored at the Royal Small Arms Pattern Room (issue 2). Although the Pattern Room was originally established to preserve the actual 'patterns' or samples, the collection grew with the acquisition of foreign weapons for evaluation purposes. When the associated Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield closed in 1988 following its take-over by British Aerospace, a new purpose-built 'Pattern Room' to house the collection was built within the confines of the Royal Ordnance site at Nottingham. This was opened on October 4, 1989 with a very similar layout to the original collection, displayed almost identically on two floors, but now with the addition of a very comprehensive library. Visits are by appointment only by making application to The Custodian, MoD Pattern Room, The Enfield Building, c/o Royal Ordnance Plc, Kings Meadow Road, Nottingham, NG2 1EQ.


Luitpoldarena
Aufmärsche von SA und SS; 150.000 Personen
Luitpoldarena
(Luitpold Arena) Mass parades of SA and SS: 150,000 persons
Große Straße
Als zentrale Achse angelegt; 2 km Länge und 60 m Breite
Große Straße
(Great Road) Created as a central axis: 2 km long, 60 m wide
Stadion
1926 vollendet; Aufmarsch der Hitlerjugend; 70.000 Personen
Stadion
(Stadium) Completed in 1928; parade ground for the Hitler Youth: 70,000 persons
Kongreßhalle
Geplantes Kongreßzentrum; 60.000 Personen
Kongreßhalle
(Congress Hall) Congress centre (not completed): 60,000 persons
Deutsches Stadion
Als größtes Stadion der Welt geplant; 400.000 Personen
Deutsches Stadion
(German Stadium) Planned as the world's largest stadium (not completed): 400,000 persons
Zeppelinwiese
Verführungen von NS-Verbänden und Wehrmacht: 70.000 Personen
Zeppelinwiese
(Zeppelin Field) Mass parades and presentations of NS associations and Wehrmacht: 70,000 persons
Zeppelintribüne
Für Ehrengäste, Parteitagsbesucher; 40.000 Personen
Zeppelintribüne
(Zeppelin Grandstand) Grandstand for guests of honour, rally visitors: 40,000 persons



Yet a complete about-face in Nuremberg where the surviving trappings of the Nazi era have now been formally 'recognised' with the publication of a guide pamphlet, *(left),* **whereas when we visited the city in 1973, nobody wanted to know.** *Above*: **A new museum display, entitled 'Fascination and Terror' is now housed in the rear of the Zepplinwiese Stadium with information panels erected throughout the old Party grounds identifying the various sites.** *Below left*: **US troops carry out their own modifications to the stadium in 1945.** *Below right*: **Karel Margry travelled to Germany specially for this issue to picture the changes.**



In the Miller Mood. Glenn Miller and the Second World War are synonymous and, having included a small piece in issue 2, I was very pleased when Chris Way detailed the bandleader's all-too-short career in *Glenn Miller in Britain Then and Now* in 1996. *Left*: One of the venues played by the band, albeit after their leader's sad demise, was also at Nuremberg. Don Haynes, the band's executive officer, wrote in his diary entry for July 1, 1945 that they 'played Nuremberg Stadium today to 40,000 screaming and cheering GIs. This same stadium was the scene of many of Adolf Hitler's gatherings, where he displayed the strength of the Nazi Party amid banner-waving crowds of sympathizers.' *Right*: Haynes was ill informed, for the old soccer stadium was used for Hitler Youth ceremonies, the big party rallies usually taking place at the Zeppelinwiese or Luitpoldhain.

The fate of Glenn Miller (issue 2) refuses to lie down, most recently a German author repeating the time-worn suggestion that the bandleader was killed in Paris, linked to the fact that remains of the Norseman had been found (again!) in the Channel. Chris Way and I deliberately avoided entering the realms of speculation in *Glenn Miller in Britain Then and Now* and my first question to this scenario would be: 'OK, if the plane came down in the sea, how did Glenn get to Paris' and, secondly, 'What happened to the pilot and Colonel Baessell, the other passenger?'

On a more positive note, I was interested to spot a picture in *Fly By*, the journal of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation at Pensacola, Florida, of Mrs Van Epps with her husband, Captain Hugh C. Van Epps, on the stage with Larry O'Brien, the director of the Glenn Miller Orchestra in the US. Why? Because Mrs Van Epps — then Lieutenant Nancy Luce — appeared in a photo in the book (page 135) on stage with the real Glenn Miller at the concert held at Wendling for the 392nd Bomb Group on August 25, 1944.

Reflecting back on past issues, No. 3 was put together in the autumn of 1973, I recall that it was in the middle of the oil crisis when petrol was severely rationed. I wanted to picture the dam at Rhayader in South Wales where Barnes Wallis had tested his theories but there was no way I could get enough fuel to go there in the ATB Land-Rover which drank it at the rate of a gallon every 14 miles! Instead I loaded up a Mini with Jerrycans for the 300-mile round trip - and nearly did it on one tankful!

Audie Murphy also featured in issue 3. Then, little had been written up on his exploits during the war and I had to rely largely on his own book *To Hell and Back*. Since then, several detailed biographies have appeared, notably by Harold B. Simpson, Don Graham and Charles Whiting, and on January 23, 1996, the Audie Murphy Research Foundation was set up. (Interested readers should write to 18008 Saratoga Way, Suite 516, Santa Clarita, California, 91351.)

Above: **Chris Way included this picture in his book to illustrate the concert at Wendling on August 25, 1944. When we wrote the caption, the identity of the girl in the centre was not known to us although the Spring 1993 issue of *Fly By* had given all the details. She was Lieutenant Nancy Luce who had drawn a winning ticket for a door prize and was taken on stage to meet Miller (on the right).**

Right: ***Fly By* then included this lovely comparison of Nancy, now Mrs Van Epps, on the stage of a Glenn Miller Orchestra concert in the States 50 years later. With her is her husband, Captain Hugh C. Van Epps, ex-US Navy (on the right), and the band's director Larry O'Brien.**

Marty Black of Silver Lake, Illinois, who has more usually written to us about his adventures on Pacific battlefields, had the opportunity to visit Holtzwihr, where the Medal of Honor action had taken place, in August 1997 and I reproduce verbatim Marty's report, the full version of which can be obtained from Marty at his E-mail address: gmblack@mc.net

'Came abreast Colmar after about a 2-hour drive, and I knew I needed to leave the highway and go east into the "sticks", toward the Rhine, to get to the small town of Holtzwihr. I apparently misread the road number on the sign that I needed, but it said "Freiburg". That's also in Germany, and I didn't want to go there, but that was roughly, very roughly in the direction I needed to head . . . So I had to proceed further north and get off at the next exit, road D3. This was fortuitous, because I ended up coming in to Holtzwihr on the same tiny, winding farm track (un-numbered) that Murphy's unit apparently used as they attacked in a southerly direction. I had Winston's photo of the site, taken in 1973, and I was looking for goalposts to mark the field. Sure enough, a soccer goal came into view, but it was on the wrong side of the road! And the lay of the land was wrong; the whole perspective was screwy. This sports area was right up against the edge of town, and the open area was missing. I got out and walked around, trying to make sense of it. A sign on a building said "Football Club Holtzwihr" (that's what they call soccer in Europe), but the location definitely wasn't the same as in Winston's photo.

'I then drove around town, trying the roads that lead into town from the west and east, but no luck. There was apparently only one soccer field complex in Holtzwihr. I spotted a group of young men outside a restaurant/pub and asked them if anyone spoke English. Nope, so I showed them Winston's photo and asked them in German where it was. They then gave me very detailed directions right back to the soccer field I had been to!

'Went back into Holtzwihr and asked a lady standing on a corner. Got the identical directions back to the Football Club! Spotted a Bibliothek (library) and leaped out of the car, figuring there would be someone who spoke English (better than I spoke German), and perhaps the Murphy site was well known! No luck, the sign on the door said they were open only from 1800-1900.

'I was getting mighty discouraged and angry for having gone to such expense and trouble, and I was getting really tired, but decided to check out the small hamlet of Wickerschwihr just to the east of Holtzwihr on D4. Going around a traffic circle, I saw a maintenance man doing some landscaping inside the circle, and our eyes met. Seeing no one in the rear-view mirror, I stopped right there in the road, and asked if he spoke English. Nope, but did I speak German? Not well

Marty Black: 'My 1996 comparison for the 1973 shot on page 32 of issue No. 3'.

— here we go again . . . And again, he gave me precise directions back to the soccer field. Exasperated, I tried to explain to him that I wanted to match up Winston's photo, and find "der alte Baum" (the old tree). He then indicated that he knew exactly what I meant, and offered to "zeigen" (show) me. What a lucky break! He got in an old truck that looked like something the Germans used in WWII; a corrugated steel body. I followed and we drove back to the soccer field, but then he motioned that we were to continue north up that farm track into the woods. We went an additional 150 yards or so, until we were surrounded by trees, and he stopped!

'I got out of the car, wondering why we had stopped here, when I noticed that he wasn't alone; there was another guy in the truck. As they approached me, I had — for a fleeting moment — the thought that I was about to lose my wallet and the $100 in French and Swiss francs that I had for emergencies. I wasn't afraid for my safety, but wondered how I would manage to drive back over two hours without any money for gas, credit cards, ID, etc.

'The natives remained friendly, however, and the driver showed me that the soccer field in Winston's photo had been converted into a "community forest" and that the old tree had been gone for some time. Sure enough, it was suddenly obvious that a large rectangular area was planted with the same type tree, all the same size (age), and with typical German efficiency, they had been planted in closely-spaced, straight rows. In

Twenty-three years on, Marty discovered new woodland planted where Roger Bell and I found an open field.

Winston's photo, the dark farmer's field between the old tree and the town is a cornfield, and the stalks rose to over 6 feet, obscuring all but the very tops of some of the buildings, blocking a "then and now" comparison.'

Below left: **Marty: 'Vehicle (TD?) parts in MG hole'.** *Below right*: **'Some .50-caliber fired shells; .30-cal casings; .50-cal links; tail light frame; MG ammo handle.'**

Steve Sullivan's low-level photo sortie: the towers are just over 100 feet high — and that's measured from the seabed!

'As an avid follower of your various publications, I have often been fascinated at the remaining evidence from the war that you and your readers discover', wrote Steve Sullivan of Crowborough, Sussex, in June 1995. 'During my spare time I find myself following in your footsteps, *After the Battle* magazine in hand, probing around old wartime ruins. A recent flight in a small aircraft out across the Thames Estuary provided me with a splendid opportunity to examine the remains of the wartime forts you covered in issue No. 4. Flying at a disgustingly low altitude, I managed to snap the enclosed black and whites of the two groups of forts nearest the mainland. They seem to be standing up to the elements very well after 50 years and appear to be home to countless seabirds.'

'The highlight of my trip', wrote Hugh Henry, author of *Dieppe Through The Lens,* 'was seeing Monsieur Colle's museum at Pourville. He has a Besa machine gun *(left)* **taken from one of the Churchills and a Lewis gun from an LCA found near the West Jetty. The flame-thrower pictured on top of the Renault turret** *(right)* **came from *TLC 5.'***

Although the landings at Dieppe were covered in issue 5, Hugh Henry's research for his dissertation — which formed the basis for our 1993 publication *Dieppe Through the Lens* — was outstanding. When Hugh went to Dieppe, he discovered the actual field where the abandoned Churchill tanks had been dumped by the Germans of which it appears only one — *Blondie* — was taken to Germany. Walter Spielberger, the German armour historian, believes that it went to the Kummersdorf proving ground and probably ended up in the wartime tank museum at Stettin. Hugh also told me that 'in August 1993, while dredging the outer harbour, the remains of *TLC-5* were found! A German flame-thrower was discovered in it leading to speculation that they refired the TLC and possibly *Blossom* for propaganda photos like the one in the centre of our cover.'

I always wondered what happened to the Churchills after the battle, and it was only following publication of the book that Alain Buriot discovered the field where all the Canadian armour had been dumped by the Germans.

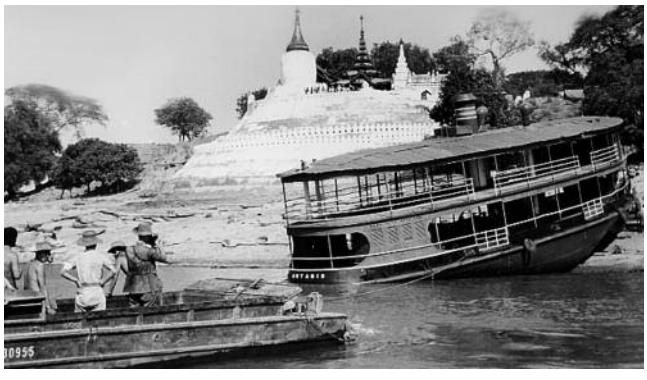
Walter Spielberger, the German armour expert, is sure that one Churchill was sent to Kummersdorf for evaluation, ending up in the Tank Museum at Stettin. It carried the WD number T68880, identifying it as *Blondie.*

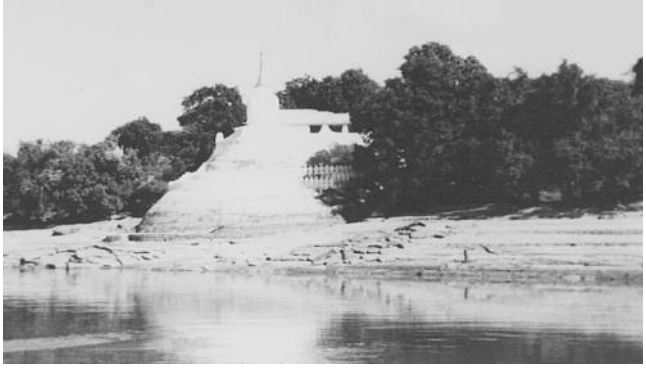
Stories which have fallen by the wayside. I felt I could not use the comparisons taken by Major Roy Hudson back in the 1970s because of their poor quality. *Above*: **The Ava Bridge — the road-rail link across the Irrawaddy.** *Below*: **Where's the bridge?**

When I look back over the last quarter century, it is amazing to count the number of stories that I have begun but which, for some reason or other, have never seen the light of day.

One difficult nut to crack was Burma because of the difficulty of visiting the interior of that country, so when Major Roy Hudson wrote to me from Chaing Mai in Thailand, saying that he could help with photographs, I promptly sent him a large selection of wartime prints. Alas, when he forwarded his comparisons, the quality was hopeless and an opportunity lost until Elliott Smock contacted me in August l997. I hope that his article will appear shortly.

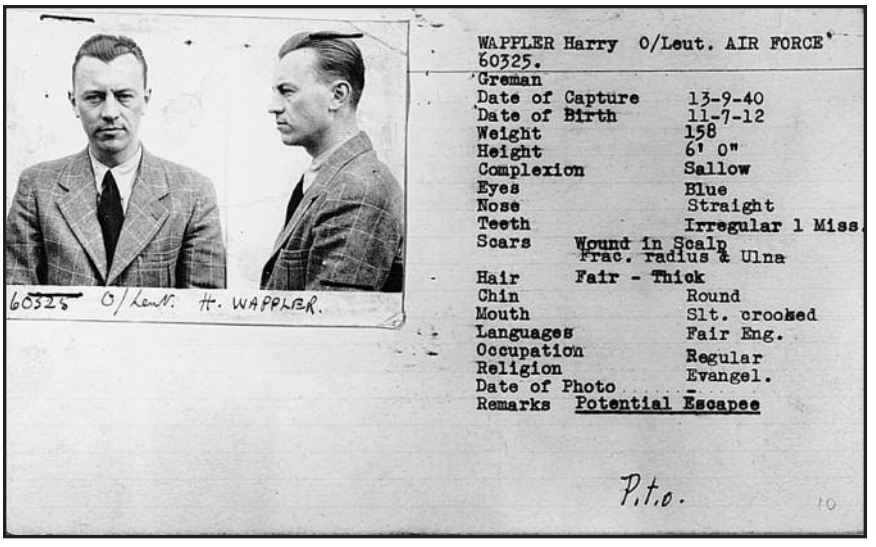
Another contact offered to do a feature on Manila in the Philippines but, having obtained original pictures from the States and sent them on to him, I never heard another word — or got the photos back!





It was sad because Major Hudson wrote in July 1974 that 'one of the decisive battles in Burma was the Battle of Sittang in February 1942. The bridge had to be demolished with two out of three brigades on the wrong side. As a subaltern in the Royal Engineers, I was a member of the company that prepared the bridge for demolition — and am now probably the only survivor.' Living in Chaing Mai, Thailand, Roy said that he was planning to visit Burma later that year. Then — as now — it is a country with severe travel restrictions, particularly in the border areas. Roy explained that he was the author of a guide book, then in its 5th edition, to Chaing Mai so he felt that he would be able to take pictures in Pagan *(above),* **Kyaikto, Mandalay** *(below),* **Monwa, Meiktila, Rangoon and Yenangyaung. Such a pity the quality of the photos was no good.**

Some of the documentation assembled by the late Cliff Vincent for his account of the daring attempt by Harry Wappler and Heinz Schnabel to steal an aeroplane and escape to Germany by air. Oberleutnant Wappler was a pilot with KG27, flying Heinkels, and had taken off from Rennes on the evening of September 12, 1940, only to end his wartime career in Queen Street, Cardiff, after colliding with a balloon cable (see *Blitz,* Volume 2, page 91). He suffered a broken arm and ended up in the 'Luftwaffe Hospital' at Woolwich (see issue 70). There he met Leutnant Schnabel of JG3 who had been shot down in Kent a week earlier (*Blitz,* Volume 1, page 310). The two became friends and found that each was interested in trying to escape, but not until they were moved north after their wounds had healed, could they put their plans into effect. They had been transferred to Camp No. 15 at Shap Wells (see issue 76, page 50) and it was from there that they broke out in November 1941.



60325 O/Leut. H. WAPPLER.

WAPPLER Harry O/Leut. AIR FORCE
60325.
Greman

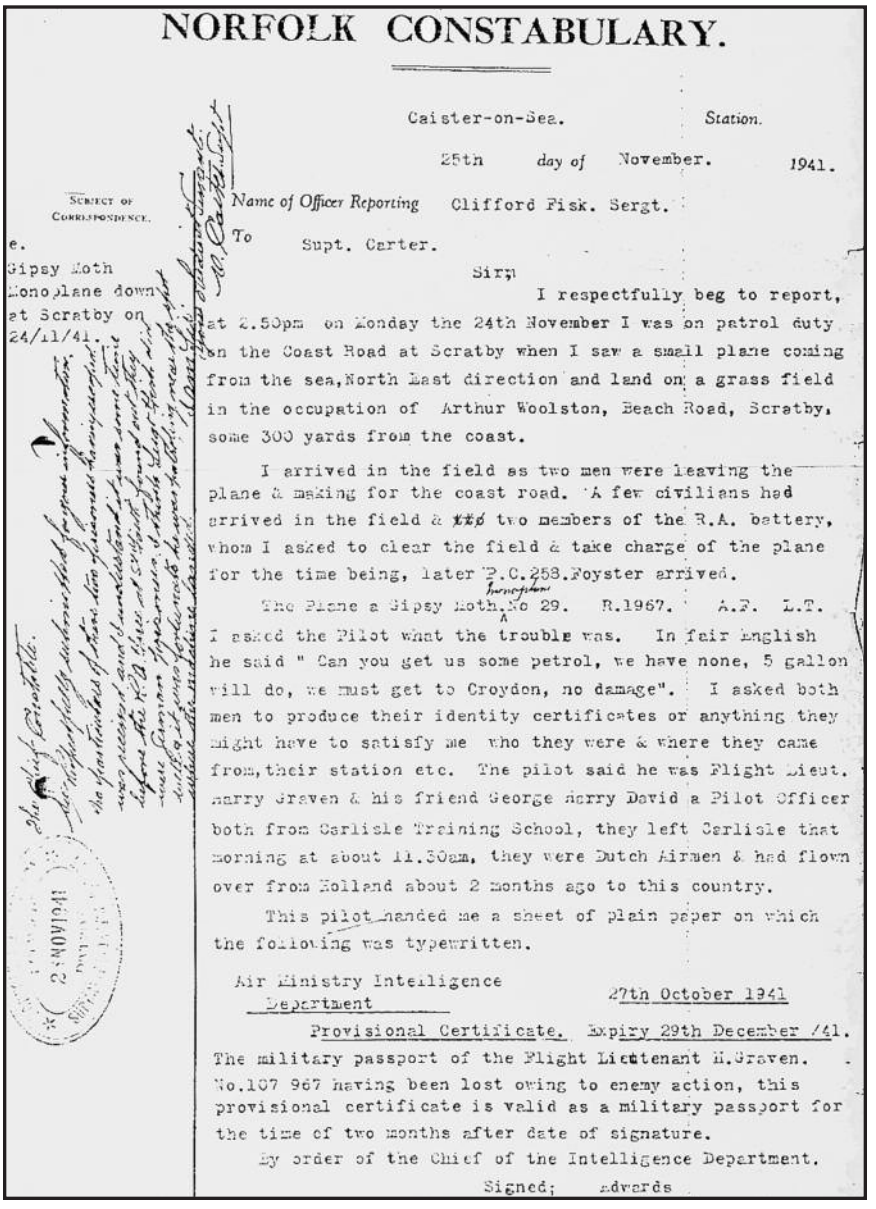
Date of Capture	13-9-40
Date of Birth	11-7-12
Weight	158
Height	6' 0"
Complexion	Sallow
Eyes	Blue
Nose	Straight
Teeth	Irregular 1 Miss.
Scars	Wound in Scalp Frac. radius & Ulna
Hair	Fair - Thick
Chin	Round
Mouth	Slt. crooked
Languages	Fair Eng.
Occupation	Regular
Religion	Evangel.
Date of Photo	-
Remarks	Potential Escapee

P.T.O.

I tried to put another story together on the post-war disposal of armaments but Sam Cummins of Interarms never responded. As one of the world's foremost arms dealers, his co-operation would be essential to the production of a feature on the subject. Now fortunately his story has been told by Patrick Brogan and Albert Zarca in *Deadly Business* (Michael Joseph Ltd, 1984).

The attempted escape of two German prisoners-of-war, Harry Wappler and Heinz Schnabel, from Britain, during which they stole a Miles Magister with the intention of flying home, is a classic escapade and was due to be written up for us by Cliff Vincent who had already researched the story in detail and interviewed Harry. Unfortunately, Cliff died in February 1985 with his manuscript unfinished and when I eventually wrote to Harry to try to complete it, his wife replied that he, too, had died.

Cliff Vincent: 'Whilst en route [to Shap Wells], the two men were given the opportunity to study the countryside. They took particular notice of the airfield to the north of Carlisle. . . . (which Wappler now knows to be Kingstown), where aeroplanes could be seen taking off and landing. . . . The second fence was reached and passed . . . they were free! . . . Within minutes they arrived at the railway embankment. . . . It was not long before they heard a train approaching labouring up the slope. . . . Hannibal *(sic)* aimed for the rear, Harry for the front of the truck. They were successful and, meeting in the middle, congratulated each other upon having got so far. . . . The train breasted the slope and gained speed and they sped north . . . a number of signal lights indicated that the town had been reached. It was time to go. . . . They unpacked the gas mask cases and soon were RAF officers. . . . The two men examined each other in the dim light and were satisfied that they would pass muster. From their hiding place, they could see two buildings, one apparently a hangar. . . . They made for a gap between the buildings expecting every minute to be challenged. Strolling along, they carefully avoided looking too "regimental". Two Warrant Officers approached. Wappler and Schnabel were interested in their reaction. It must be remembered that this would be their first confrontation in daylight with members of the enemy forces. . . . It was now between 10 and 11 a.m. and the escapees began to worry about the passage of time. . . . In the south-west corner beyond the perimeter they saw two Magisters. These had been hidden by a slight ground elevation. Making for these, they noticed a mechanic cycling towards the same aeroplanes from the opposite direction. . . . Wappler and Schnabel arrived before he did, and both climbed into the aeroplane. The mechanic stood by the side and Harry asked him to give a helping hand to get her going! "Off!" "Off!" (ignition) the mechanic was busy swinging the propeller. . . . and soon the engine was off to a full blooded roar. It is difficult to describe adequately the feelings of the two men at this moment. . . .'



NORFOLK CONSTABULARY.

Caister-on-Sea. Station.

25th day of November. 1941.

Name of Officer Reporting Clifford Fisk. Sergt.

To Supt. Carter.

Sir,

I respectfully beg to report, at 2.50pm on Monday the 24th November I was on patrol duty on the Coast Road at Scratby when I saw a small plane coming from the sea, North East direction and land on a grass field in the occupation of Arthur Woolston, Beach Road, Scratby, some 300 yards from the coast.

I arrived in the field as two men were leaving the plane & making for the coast road. A few civilians had arrived in the field & two members of the R.A. battery, whom I asked to clear the field & take charge of the plane for the time being, later P.C.258 Foyster arrived.

The Plane a Gipsy Moth. No 29. R.1967. A.F. L.T. I asked the Pilot what the trouble was. In fair English he said " Can you get us some petrol, we have none, 5 gallon will do, we must get to Croydon, no damage". I asked both men to produce their identity certificates or anything they might have to satisfy me who they were & where they came from, their station etc. The pilot said he was Flight Lieut. Harry Graven & his friend George Harry David a Pilot Officer both from Carlisle Training School, they left Carlisle that morning at about 11.30am, they were Dutch Airmen & had flown over from Holland about 2 months ago to this country.

This pilot handed me a sheet of plain paper on which the following was typewritten.

Air Ministry Intelligence Department 27th October 1941

Provisional Certificate. Expiry 29th December /41.

The military passport of the Flight Lieutenant H.Graven. No.107 967 having been lost owing to enemy action, this provisional certificate is valid as a military passport for the time of two months after date of signature.

By order of the Chief of the Intelligence Department.

Signed; Edwards

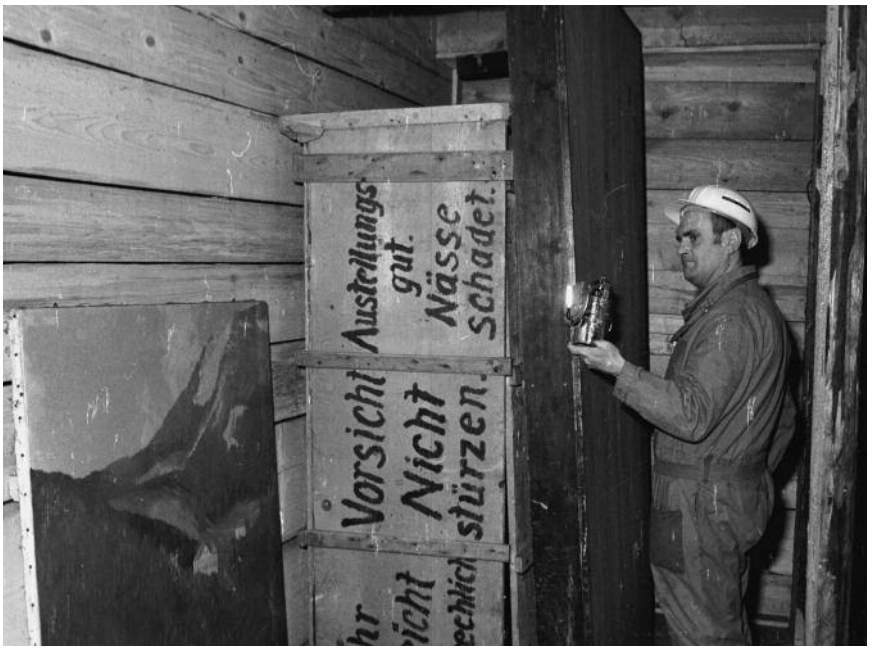
Gipsy Moth Monoplane down at Scratby on 24/11/41.

In the first few issues of the magazine, I publicised what was to appear in future issues — but I soon discovered this to be a folly. The length of time to carry out the research, visit the places — sometimes in two or three different countries —, write up the story, check the proofs, do the layout etc, etc, meant that I could not predict how long any particular feature would take. This is the reason why we still do not give the contents of the next issue in advance. Thus it was with my planned story on looted art. *Above left:* **Lieutenant James Rorimer, curator of fine arts at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, latterly the monuments officer of the US Seventh Army, supervises the removal of paintings from Neuschwanstein Castle at Füssen, about 80 miles south of Munich.** *Above right:* **We re-enacted the scene — this is May 1975.**

Another feature that I wanted to include was on the looting of art treasures and their subsequent recovery by the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section of the US Army. I therefore made contact with Thomas Carr Howe, the former Deputy Chief of the MFA & A and former director of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, one of San Francisco's two municipal museums of fine art, who agreed to help. I visited and took photographs at two of the locations where art treasure looted by the Nazis had been found — the Alt-Aussee salt mine in Austria and Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, but came up against a blank wall when trying to discover where particular paintings had ended up. We may still be able to get the story together some day but meanwhile I am including a couple of the pictures I took back in the 1970s.

And there are many more instances where, for a variety of reasons, stories have failed to make it into print.

Pride of place is probably reserved for John Hillyer-Funke who assisted me with my research into the suicide of Himmler (issue 14). John offered me a story on the Polish destroyer *Blyskawica* which had a colourful wartime career from her early days as a flak ship at Cowes on the Isle of Wight in 1940, to shelling and sinking the captured *U-2321* which broke its tow to the Atlantic on Operation 'Deadlight' (issue 36) in 1945. She is now preserved at Gdynia. Correspondence in my file with John began in 1984 . . . his text is still eagerly awaited!



We went on to the salt mine at Alt-Aussee in Austria where much of the looted art was stored and found some of the original wartime crates still lying in the caverns *(above).* **However, the story foundered because of the difficulty of tracing both the original provenance and the whereabouts of all the paintings today as I wanted to picture them now on the wall of some art gallery.**

I've got the pictures . . . where's your copy, John, to tell the story of this lovely preserved Polish warship?

The on-going saga of the deaths of the Italian dictator and his mistress. The most-recent theories into the way they died are given by Giorgio Pisano in *Gli ultimi cinque secondi di Mussolini* (The Last Five Seconds of Mussolini's Life), who claims that Mussolini was shot fatally against the stable door *(left)* of the De Maria house where they had both been held on the night of April 27/28, 1945. His account is based on two witnesses to the executions, one being Dorina Mazzola who indicates the spot *(right)* where Claretta was killed.

Sergio Andreanelli keeps abreast of developments with regards to the killing of Mussolini (issue 7; see also issues 25, page 22, and issue 66, page 55) and writes that 'every year new revelations and theories keep surfacing, increasing the eternal mystery of his death. Of all these new theories, the two latest are worth mentioning. First, Fabrizio Castellini states that a certain Malcolm Smith, born in Sicily and serving in the British Intelligence Service, arrived in Bonzanigo at the De Maria house early morning on April 28 and executed Mussolini and Claretta, and removed the embarrassing file about Churchill's correspondence with Mussolini. However, Mr Smith's wife denies strongly this theory as utterly false and with no evidence in truth whatsoever.

'Then Giorgio Pisano, a right-wing member of the Italian Parliament who has been searching for the truth for 40 years, published his book *The Last Five Seconds of Mussolini's Life* in 1996. According to him "Valerio" (Walter Audisio) gave different and contrasting versions of the execution because he was not present, only being told to assume the rôle of official executioner by the PCI (Partito Comunista Italiano). Nevertheless, all the facts "Valerio" described have been proven by a lot of people to be false and contradictory. The new version — and Pisano's book is well documented with lots of evidence — is based on two prime witnesses who, incidently, did not know each other and have never met during all these years. The first is Savina Cantoni, wife of Guglielmo Cantoni "Sandrino", who, with Giuseppe Frangi "Lino", was guarding Mussolini and Claretta at the De Maria's house, and the other Dorina Mazzola who lived in the house down the hill. Sandrino, who died in 1972, left a diary which was given to the Major of Gera Lario, Giuseppe Giulini, who died in 1992. Unfortunately, it subsequently disappeared, but Savina was told of it by her husband who was, like a lot of other witnesses, scared stiff of being murdered. In fact, numerous witnesses have been found shot or killed or have vanished without trace in mysterious circumstances. All the people directly or indirectly involved in the execution were pledged to silence for 50 years by the PCI. Anyway, Sandrino confided in his wife and could only tell her that "it did not happen as written by 'Valerio' and that he definitely did not kill Mussolini".

'Dorina Mazzola, who was just 19 in 1945, became fed up with the constant plethora of lies written in hundreds of books and articles and decided to write her own version of what she witnessed to three different newspapers. By coincidence, she was contacted by Pisano who had almost completed his own investigation. Dorina told him that at about 8.30 a.m. she saw men, not in uniform and with machine guns, on the road towards Bonzanigo and the De Maria house. She then heard two shots followed later on by others, seven in all. Then she saw a distressed woman shouting for help from one of the windows of the De Maria's house, who was then dragged inside. Two hours later the woman, dressed in a fur coat, was walking in front of the house when suddenly someone shot her in the back with a machine gun.

'The long and the short of all this is, according to the two witnesses, that Moretti with two men arrived at around eight o'clock at De Maria's house (Sandrino does not identify any of them). Mussolini is shot and injured in the bedroom by the first two shots. Limping and helped by the men, he is then taken outside the house, bound to the stable door, and shot fatally. Claretta, after calling for help, is taken downstairs and later killed. During all this time, a lot of other weapons are discharged in the area to create a diversion. The two bodies are then loaded into a dark-coloured car which is parked for a couple of hours in the garage of the nearby Hotel Milano. Mussolini's body is taken to a local fountain where it is washed clean as there was a lot of cow dung in front of the stable door. In the afternoon, the bodies were dumped in front of the gates of Villa Belmonte where Aldo Lampredi ("a man wearing a white raincoat and a dark beret" and not "Valerio" who was wearing a brand-new khaki uniform with a scarf), performed the so-called "false execution".

'Pisano suggests that Luigi Longo, now dead but then head of all the communist partisan brigades, was the man who killed Mussolini. He knew at all times where Mussolini was being kept and did not want the Allies to capture him and put him on trial. Mussolini was Italian and the Italians had to solve their own affairs.' Someone was also seen around the area and in Dongo with a very sophisticated camera, 'so', says Sergio, 'perhaps one day pictures of all these events may surface'.

The bodies in the public mortuary in Milan, photographed by Sergeant Radford on April 29, 1945. L-R: Mussolini, Claretta and former secretary of the Fascist Party, Achille Starace.

The German enigma on the Obersalzberg. On one hand, Hitler's mountain retreat remains perfectly intact as a tourist attraction. . . .

Terry Eckert of New York visited the Eagle's Nest in September 1990 — surely one of the most striking buildings directly associated with Hitler to survive today totally intact. 'As you may recognise', said Terry, 'most of my photos were taken from the same position as you did in issue 9'.

However, since then, there have been new developments on the Obersalzberg, which have led to the loss of two of the major historical remains there. First, late in 1996, came the news that the garage to the Berghof had been destroyed. Then, in September 1997, we discovered that Hitler's guest house, one of the most-impressive surviving original buildings (featured on the cover of issue 9), had also been all but razed to the ground.

After the departure of the Americans in 1995, ownership of the Obersalzberg area fell to the Bavarian government, who are understandably concerned that the awkward legacy of the Obersalzberg is treated correctly. The official reason given to us for the removal of the Berghof garage is that the underground building constituted a safety risk; but clearly the other reason — to prevent the garage becoming a place of pilgrimage for neo-Nazis and other right-wing radicals — was as important, if not more so.

We were also told that in order to properly document the historical background of the Obersalzberg, and counter-balance the sometimes over-nostalgic publications for sale at the tourist stands, the Bavarian government has decided to create a documentation centre, which is to be built on the site of the old guest house. The renowned Munich Institut für Zeitgeschichte is responsible for setting up the permanent exhibition, and the new museum will include direct access to part of the underground tunnel system (an entrance to which is just north-west of the old guest house). Planned opening is summer 1998.

. . . but his guest house, which we featured on the cover of issue 9, has now been demolished — in order to build a 'documentation centre' on the site concerning the history of the Hitler era! An inexplicable paradox and a further indication of the immense difficulty the Germans have in coming to terms with their recent history.

Another paradox: the destruction of an historical ruin like the Berghof garage can only highlight the very history the authorities seek to expunge. The building may have gone but the site *(left)* **still remains . . . as does a piece of retaining wall** *(right).*

Obtaining the co-operation of the authorities has been a very important behind-the-scenes aspect of my work on *After the Battle* and we have fortunately enjoyed excellent relationships with the various bodies concerned. One could tell many interesting stories were it not that confidences would be compromised but I think at this distance in time, I can recount one example of unofficial help.

When I visited Malta in 1975 to carry out research for issue 10, the Royal Navy and RAF still had bases on the island although at the time the Maltese authorities were seeking to break the long historical ties with Britain in favour of new-found friends in North Africa. I wanted to include aerial shots of the various airfields which featured in the defence of Malta and also I had in mind for the cover an oblique view of the bridge demolished by the Italians during their attack on Grand Harbour in July 1941. However, there were no private aircraft for hire on the island and the airspace was then virtually controlled by the Libyan Air Force which regularly patrolled the coastline in a huge helicopter. This was based at St Andrew's Barracks and it looked as if the only way to take aerial photographs was via this machine. Discreet enquiries revealed that if I appeared at the right time at the right place, a ride could be arranged but under no circumstances must I say I was a British journalist. Fortunately, everything went according to plan. Two crewmen were fast asleep inside when it touched down and I was allowed to sit with my feet dangling out of the large loading door. I was fastened to the interior by a thin webbing strap but I couldn't help feeling nervous leaning out as it would have been the easiest thing in the world to cast me loose into oblivion!

Some three years later — in 1978 — I went to Gibraltar for issue 21. At that time, the border dispute with Spain was very much on, adding to the drama, and British forces were very much in evidence, the Army having been based on the rock since it was captured from Spain in 1704. I received excellent co-operation from all three services and was permitted to visit several locations normally out of bounds. To me, the construction of the tunnels which now honeycomb the rock was an essential part of the wartime story as the spoil had been used to extend the airfield's runway into the sea. However, no plan or map of the tunnels had ever been published yet I felt I must include one to do the story justice and I approached Fortress Headquarters on the subject. The then-commander was very sympathetic to my request and when the drawing appeared in issue 21 (pages 18-19), it created incredible local interest. Interviewed on Gibraltar Television, I was asked point-blank if the security of the Rock had been compromised by its publication. I had to be careful in my answer because one condition of my publishing the plan was that I first carried out certain deletions which I could obviously not reveal to the viewing public.

Picturing Malta from the air, courtesy of the Libyan Air Force! All that secured me from plummeting to the ground was a thin piece of webbing. The things I have done for *After the Battle*!

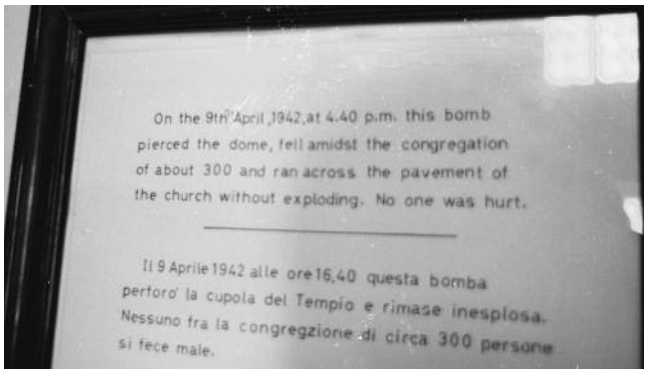
When I first visited Malta, we were shown the bomb which we were told had pierced the roof of Mosta church without exploding . . . but Andrew Danks of Ballingry, Fife, knows otherwise!

'Many years ago I first visited Malta with the Army, later on holiday when, ironically, I stayed in my old barracks. That bomb displayed at Mosta *IS NOT* the bomb that went through the dome. That one was taken away and blown up by two Scotsmen working with the RAF ground crew, and this is a duplicate bomb. I recently wrote to the Malta Tourist Office in London, and they have confirmed my interest, and they state: "With reference to the bomb that fell through the Dome of Mosta Church, this is a replica, the original was made safe and blown up".'

'Told for the first time, the story of the German spies shot at dawn in the Tower of London.' 'The full story has never before been disclosed.' So ran the headlines in Britain's newspapers on June 17, 1997, and Malcolm Hoosen telephoned anxiously from Cambridge complaining that no mention had been made of our feature on German spies published in issue 11 over 20 years previously. The headlines were introducing articles on Leonard Sellers' new book *Shot in the Tower* (Leo Cooper) and an excellent book it is, but sometimes one has to smile.

Incidentally, the chair in which the Second War German agent Josef Jakobs was shot, which we were told in 1976 would never be displayed in our lifetime, was put on show at the Tower in 1997!

A change of heart at the Tower of London. The chair in which the German spy Josef Jakobs was shot in 1941 (see issue 11, page 25) was put on temporary display in 1997; Danny Ponton tracked it down for us at Royal Armouries, Leeds.


On the 9th April, 1942, at 4.40 p.m. this bomb pierced the dome, fell amidst the congregation of about 300 and ran across the pavement of the church without exploding. No one was hurt.
Il 9 Aprile 1942 alle ore 16,40 questa bomba perforo' la cupola del Tempio e rimase inesplosa. Nessuno fra la congregzione di circa 300 persone si fece male.

The misleading inscription on the plaque beside the Mosta bomb as we pictured it in 1975.

Vera the Beautiful Spy. David Morrison of Bath, Somerset, wrote to me in 1995 to say that he had recently been to Portgordon (where Vera and Karl Drugge were arrested) only to find that the railway station and track have completely disappeared *(left)* **since we photographed them** *(right)* **for issue 11. Probably the sole remaining artefact is the counter on which they had purchased their train tickets — we rescued it for the *After the Battle* collection in 1975 and now it stands in our office.**

Our first and only attempt at film-making in 1976 was a very enlightening experience . . . even if it was a financial disaster. At the time, I felt the story of the landing of the first three German agents in Scotland would make a good documentary, particularly as the police officers associated with their apprehension were still alive. I also hoped it might be the forerunner of more ATB films. However, I did not bargain for the vagaries of the purchasing system then operated by the regional television companies.

Because I wanted to retain editorial control, I refrained from attempting to do a deal with a TV station beforehand. Although this is the way most programmes are made and would have guaranteed the project financially, I would then have had to compromise historical accuracy against expediency.

I had an example of this when we arrived at Edinburgh's Waverley Station when David Rea, my chosen director, said it was too dark to film at the correct spot where Werner Walti had been arrested. He suggested we move along the platform where the light was better but I flatly refused. 'We either do it here', I stated firmly, 'or we go home now!' David got the point and I never had another problem but I know that much fiddling goes on to make many documentaries, justified under that all-embracing phrase 'poetic licence'.

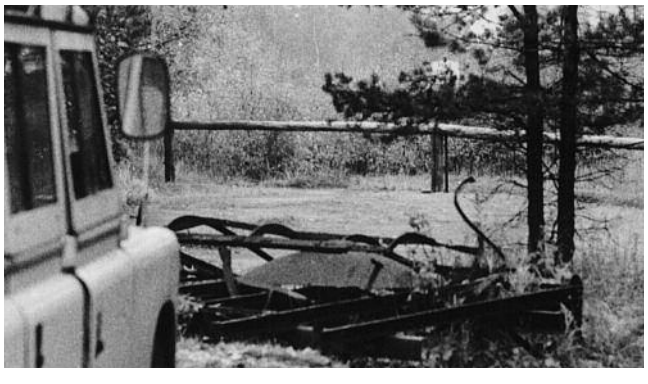
Both the BBC and the ITV network buyer (Jeremy Isaacs) turned down *Vera the Beautiful Spy* which meant that I had to try to sell it to each region individually. There was a fixed price for an hour's-worth of film and each region paid a proportion of this figure according to the number of viewers in their area. This resulted in the farcical situation whereby the Scottish company for which it was most suitable, paid the least, and I think they got the £7,000 film for £200!

I had a lot of fun making it and trying to look professional while learning the lines I had to deliver, but I had learned my lesson so no more films. Having forgotten all about it, my grey cells were jogged into life in October 1996 with a telephone call from a Sarah Wood. 'We have just discovered that my father Chris was in a film that you made', she said, and I then recalled that we had recruited a chap Chris Wood, then serving at a local RAF station, who David Rea felt was a good look-alike for Walti. 'We found a copy of your magazine (issue 11) yesterday', continued Sarah, 'as my dad died recently'.

Chris Wood (left) as Werner Walti . . . RIP.

Back in the 1970s, when I drew up a list of possible stories to feature in the magazine, I included the Iron Curtain. I made one reconnaissance when preparing the Volkswagen story for issue 12 as the VW factory at Wolfsburg lay just down the road from the East German border. It certainly felt uncomfortable being watched by guards with field glasses as I took some photographs and I could almost feel the cross-hairs of a rifle scope on my back as I turned away. I was interested to find the burned-out coach which still marked the border on the old Berlin road near Helmstedt but, in the end, I decided that the Iron Curtain was really outside the timescale I had set for *After the Battle*.

Above: **The 'Ausgebrannter Bus' which was drawn across the main road at Helmstedt at the end of the war to mark the border between the US and Soviet Zones.** *Below left:* **In 1974 we found the skeleton of the burned-out coach still intact.** *Below right:* **Specially for this issue, I asked Karel Margry to follow up several sites in Germany to picture the changes since we last visited them and one sortie was to this section of Iron Curtain. Although the Helmstedt-Magdeburg road has been completely upgraded, Karel was much excited to find, behind the sign, the rusting remains of the coach. Surely this must be preserved?**



Left: **Our old trusty Land-Rover beside the viewing platform at Grasleben (north of Helmstedt).** *Right:* **Karel found the spot and discovered that the site of the platform is now marked with a descriptive plaque stating that 'At this point, Germany was divided for 40 years, brought about by a dictatorial system'.**

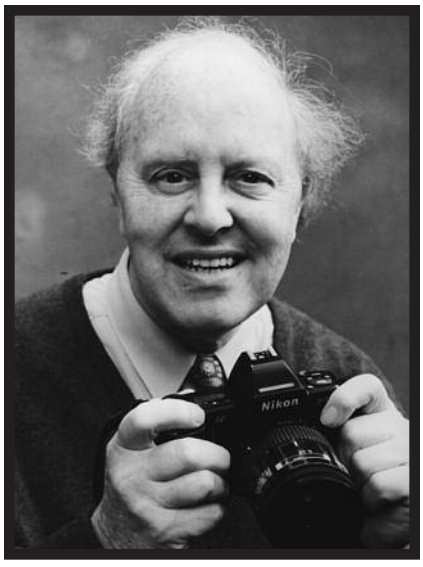
Dismantling the 800-mile border fortifications between East and West Germany took five years, the final 600-yard section near Hof in Bavaria being cleared in November 1995. Of the 1.2 million mines laid along the border by East Germany in the 1970s, most were removed during the thaw in East-West relations in the mid-1980s. Scores of soldiers were injured during the work because of the haphazard way the mines had been laid and the primitive methods given to the troops to clear them. However, during the five-year clearance programme following German reunification, not a single one of the 650 former East German border troops carrying out the work was injured by a mine explosion although records indicated that 33,860 mines were still unaccounted for in October 1990. However, only 1,100 mines were recovered, leading experts to deduce that the East German records were inaccurate.

When I pulled out the photographs I had taken in October 1974 to write this piece, I thought it would be interesting to go back and take some comparisons and so I asked Karel Margry to include a visit during his follow-up tour to Germany for this issue in September 1997. Although much had changed in the last 20 years — mostly in the last five — he could not believe his eyes when he found the same burned-out coach pushed to the side of the newly resurfaced road.

It was a misty day back in 1974 and the 'death strip' looked very foreboding. Nevertheless, the schoolboy in me got the better and I crept up and jangled the sensor wire on the inside (eastern) side of the fence with a stick. I then ran back to watch what happened . . . precisely nothing!

The bridge over the River Aller — blocked off in 1974 *(above left);* **open to traffic in 1997** *(right).*

Wahrstedt. Closed road in 1974 *(left)* **but no sign of the old check-point in 1997** *(right).*



Left: **Henry Wills' contribution to our knowledge of Britain's wartime defences cannot be measured — he toiled ceaselessly for ten years to compile a complete record of every pillbox, casemate and defence line in the United Kingdom. He will be so sadly missed.** *Right:* **I never had the opportunity to discuss with him the amazing appearance of beach defences complete with mines attached which surfaced in Whitsand Bay (between Plymouth and Looe) just two weeks after Henry died. How fascinated he would have been because I remember asking him in 1974 if any of the scaffolding beach obstacles had survived anywhere and we both assumed that all would have been dismantled at the end of the war.**

And talking of Volkswagens, it was an odd analogy used by the *Seattle Times* to describe the fire-power of the battleship USS *Missouri* that its 16-inch guns could fire shells the weight of Volkswagens more than 20 miles. The article, which appeared in May 1995, was announcing that the US Navy was removing the ship from the Navy register, along with the *Iowa*, *New Jersey* and *Wisconsin*, ready for disposal. We published a piece on the *Missouri*, on which the Japanese surrender was signed, in November 1985 (issue 50). Then, the ship was due to be recommissioned with Tomahawk and Harpoon missiles but it was subsequently deactivated in 1991. The *Missouri,* berthed at Bremerton, was opened to the public for the 50th anniversary of the surrender but a strong claim to have her transferred to Pearl Harbor had been lodged by the Honolulu-based USS Missouri Memorial Association.

Henry Wills established a specialised niche for himself with his research into Britain's fixed home defences. When I first contacted Henry, who was chief photographer on the *Salisbury Journal,* in 1974 to ask him if he would prepare a feature for us on Britain's invasion defences (issue 14), he was just beginning his mammoth task of recording the location of every pillbox in the country. It was only later, when all the positions were plotted on maps, that the structure of Britain's 1940 defences became apparent, for until then no wartime maps of the various 'stop' lines appeared to have survived.

Pillboxes was published by Leo Cooper in 1985 and established Henry as *the* expert on the subject, appearing on television and radio programmes. He already planned a second volume and had completed the manuscript only to be struck down by a sudden, fatal heart attack in April 1996.

Henry was a good friend and a generous man with his information and support. Nothing was too much trouble and he was always very interested in whatever new project we had on the stocks. The Royal Observer Corps was one of his other pursuits and I remember spending a very interesting evening with him at his local ROC early warning post near Salisbury. Later, Henry contributed to Volume 3 of *The Blitz Then and Now*. He will be greatly missed.

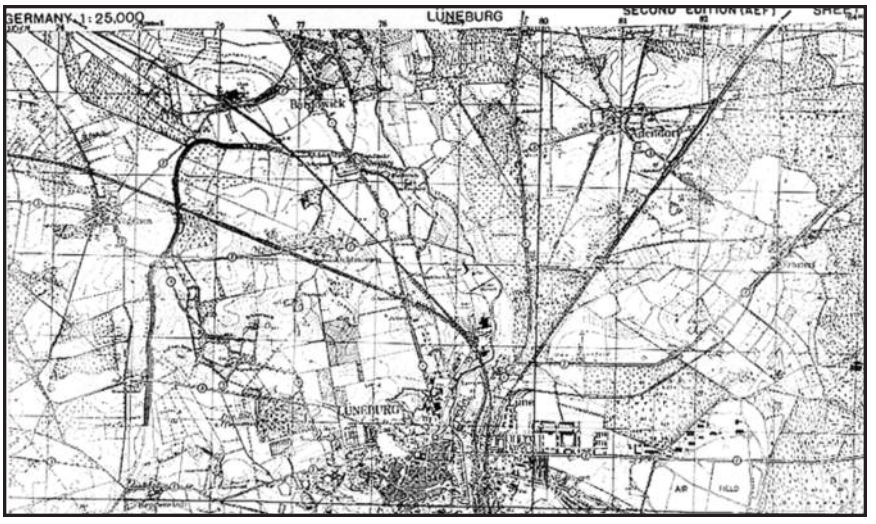
Issue 14 was also the one in which I recounted Himmler's last days. The final resting place of the Gestapo chief was revealed to me by two of the soldiers who had dug his secret grave and the report of my trip with them to Germany was published in issue 17 in August 1977. Since then, sadly, both Bill Weston and Bill Ottery have passed away, leaving us with the responsibility of keeping the grave location secret for the reasons I explained in issue 17. However, in 1996, I received an approach from the German television network ZDF to 'cooperate' with them to be interviewed beside the grave which they said should then be dug up as a finale to their film documentary on the life of Himmler. It was put to me that their Interior Ministry were in favour of the plan in case the grave was found by accident and subsequently elevated to that of a Nazi shrine.

In politely and firmly denying their request, I explained that I would be willing to give them an interview, in my office, to explain why I felt the original reasons for disposing of the body secretly in 1945 were still valid for that very same reason: that the spot once revealed would become revered by Nazi sympathisers. ZDF continued to pressure me into changing my mind, suggesting that I could go alone with a cameraman of my choice to film the grave for them. My answer was still the same: Nein!

Memories of another good friend came flooding back when I found this picture taken in May 1974. Peter Cornish (back to camera in the white shirt) was dedicated to finding what happened to the midget submarine *X5* which had been sent with *X6* and *X7* to attack the *Tirpitz* in Kaafjord. I recounted Peter's adventures in issue 17 . . . sadly in issue 85 I had to record his passing. It is an interesting photo in another way as it shows my old Philips 1500 video recorder. Sylvia Stannett, who worked at ATV (she later married Chris Stevens), wangled me one of the first 100 to be imported into the country in 1972. Then, video recorders were such a new invention that I remember I bought it without paying any purchase tax as VCRs were not then listed in the Customs & Excise regulations! Members of Peter's diving team are watching a film I had recorded about the attacks on the Tirpitz — I'm sitting second from left.

Where is Himmler buried? Now that the two Bills have passed on, unless the map reference is hidden in some closed file, I suppose that I am the only one who knows the spot. As I told Lutz Becker of Germany's ZDF TV: 'The grave is somewhere on this sheet!' (Don't worry, the secret will not die with me — there is a marked map in our safe.)

In the end, a camera team appeared at Church House and spent a morning interviewing me during which several leading questions were asked, the answers to which would have given viewers a clue as to the location. I therefore deliberately gave misleading replies without telling outright lies (the politicians call it 'being economical with the truth') but I didn't want to let them go away empty-handed so I gave them a copy of the wartime map covering Lüneburg which encompassed an area of several square miles. 'The grave is somewhere on that sheet', I said. 'You have just got to find it!'

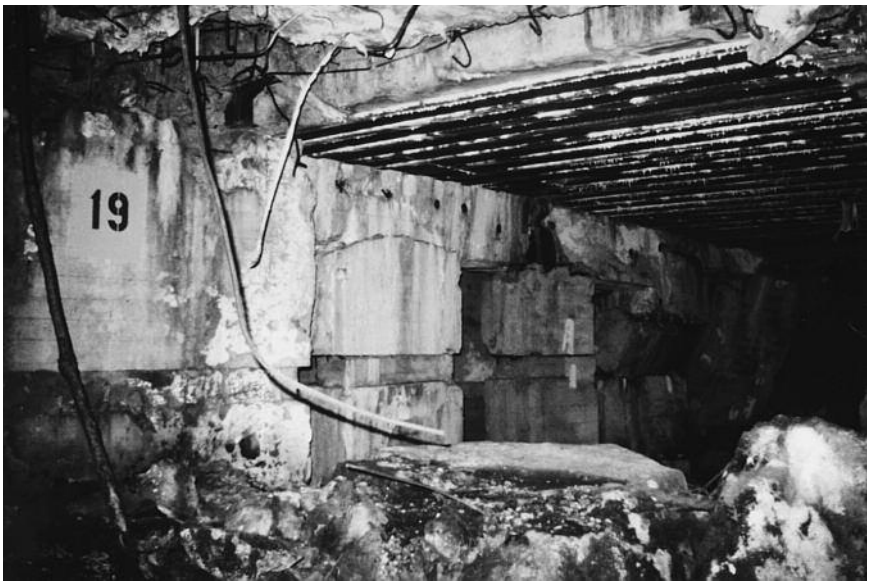


One of the stories that I really enjoyed doing was the crossing of the Rhine for issue 16. Not only did we cover every site, but the drive itself along the magnificent river would have been something just on its own. And then there are all the classic incidents: Patton piddling . . . Churchill crossing . . . Monty mouthing . . . and grumpy de Gaulle! Best of all, the Remagen bridge. I asked Karel to picture the changes as I have not been back since we recovered that railway sleeper in the 1970s — long before the museum was born. Compare these two views taken by Karel in September 1997 with those in issue 16: page 2 *(above left)* **and page 7** *(above right).* **The sleeper, along with many other artefacts recovered from the battlefields during the past 25 years, are now displayed at Church House. We were forced to move from New Plaistow Road in 1987 to obtain more space for the storage of *After the Battle* publications and took over the nearby premises formerly used by Horne Bros to make their shirts, pyjamas and ties. When I researched the history of the building, I discovered that it had been owned from 1942-46 by Coty (which absorbed Helena Rubenstein and Cussons). So the magazine is now produced where products were manufactured to powder the faces and scent the bodies of British womanhood during the war . . . what a lovely thought!**

Jean-Louis Roba of Charleroi, Belgium, sent me an interesting picture taken by a Mr W. Theys in 1947 in Brûly-de-Pesche — the location of Hitler's personal headquarters in June 1940 (issue 19). The word 'Wolf' was common to several of the Führerhauptquartiere and the village inn at Brûly was renamed the Wolf's Palace just for the occasion. When we made our visit in 1977, the double doors had been bricked up (see page 15) but in 1947 . . .

On page 10 of issue 80 (May 1993), Dr Richard Raiber, author of the feature on Hitler's headquarters in issue 19, speculated on the location of 'W3' in France. In July 1996, Frits Stol of Oldehove in the Netherlands gave us the answer: 'In June 1996, I paid a visit to the vicinity of St-Rimay, a small village between Vendôme and Montoire-sur-Loire, France (Hitler met Petain and Laval at the station at Montoire on October 22 and 24, 1940). I can report that 'W3' is still intact and can be visited. Two giant bunkers, including the Führerbunker exist near the northern entrance of the railway tunnel. Unfortunately, the Führerbunker is totally overgrown so its hard to provide a good photo this time of the year. The railway tunnel, about 500 metres long, is very special. There are two giant steel doors (5x5 metres) on both the tunnel entrances (each one about 30 metres inside). They could be closed in case the tunnel was used by the 'Führersonderzug' but beware, it is still possible that a tourist train passes through the tunnel during the summer months!'

Shades of the Führer! Two very interesting pictures concerning Hitler's former headquarters came from Jean-Louis Roba *(left)* **and Frits Stol** *(right).* **Frits has carried out a particularly important piece of research in identifying the mystery HQ 'W3'**



Keith Spanner of High Wycombe is a regular correspondent and he sent me some pictures he had taken at Hitler's huge Eastern Front HQ at Rastenburg. 'I went with Malcolm Gray and our visit in 1994 was to coincide with September 1st — the 55th anniversary of the Westerplatte battle in Gdansk (Danzig) recounted in issue 65. We saw Wolfsschanze (issue 19) with much foliage covering all the bunker surrounds so it was difficult to get many unobstructed pictures. However I enclose two shots of the "Führerbunker" inside and out — the former a reverse of the back cover of issue 19 *(left)* **plus the "Keitelbunker" photo** *(right)* **on page 33 with Hitler and Goering — some 52 years later. Our Polish guide was a bit of a 'jokey' character but he was able to match many of the *After the Battle* photos, some of which have changed further since the magazine came out. There was a big ceremony this year for the 50th anniversary of "20 July" but Stauffenberg's sons were not present as they had been in July 1992 for the plaque unveiling on the site.'**

In the early days of *After the Battle*, producing stories on subjects in Eastern Europe was fraught with danger as a camera and communism just do not mix. I had offers of help from several contacts who had reason to travel behind the Iron Curtain but photographing anything out of the ordinary, like bridges or railway stations, would have been very risky and tantamount to spying. Dr Raiber was arrested when he paid too much attention to the layout of Hitler's Wolfschanze complex in East Prussia, which he was mapping for his research with Peter Hoffmann (issue 19), and the person taking the pictures for Dr Ivanov's account of the assassination of Heydrich (issue 24) in Prague was also run in by police and had his film confiscated. Much to his credit, he went out again and retook the comparisons we needed, but thereafter I refrained from putting people in jeopardy as I had no wish to have been responsible for someone ending up in a communist jail just for taking photographs for me.

Jean Paul Pallud, who needs little introduction as he has been producing stories for us since the early days, took more risks in 1982 in Budapest for issue 40, and Ian Henderson took chances of a different sort the previous year when researching issue 34 as some of his journeys meant loitering in IRA country. I had also been arrested outside Lichfield Barracks in 1979 taking photographs for issue 27.

Perhaps it is a sign of the times but both Karel and I have encountered violence in recent years while taking photographs for the magazine. Karel was beaten up by officials near Salerno and I was mugged in Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington (in north London). Karel was taking the comparison on page 36 of issue 95 when railway police pulled him in and roughed him up, and I was searching for the grave of John Robinson (page 45 of issue 93). I had just pictured the grave of General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army for *The East End Then and Now* (page 221) when I was cornered in this wildly overgrown cemetery by two young thugs (in police jargon, an RC1 and RC3). They say discretion is the better part of valour but, after its all over, you wish you had whacked them otherwise one feels that muggers only grow in confidence and next time probably rob some defenceless old lady. However, ever mindful of my duty, my first thought was to try to save the camera and rolls of exposed film. When I was ordered to turn round I thought 'bugger that and get stabbed in the back' so I refused and in the end they went off satisfied with cash. Afterwards, I reflected that it would not have been too bad had I met my end there amid the brambles next to the General: at least my epitaph could have been the enviable enigmatic 'He died on the job!'

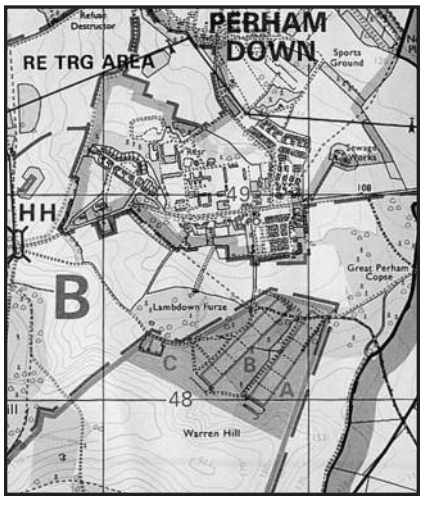
Taking photographs for *After the Battle* has not been without its dangers and both Karel (who first contributed to the magazine in 1987 for issue 56) and I have suffered violence in the line of duty. Sporty Karel — seen *(left)* **speed-skating in Italy (500 metres in 43.75 seconds!) — tells me that he first came across *After the Battle* in April 1974 when he was 17 and still at school. 'I had one look and, as we say, in Holland, was "sold at once". Having already toured the Arnhem, Normandy and Ardennes battlefields, the "then and now" theme had an immediate appeal to me. I was fascinated by the amount of detail in the text and captions and it was the first publication where photographs on a page were really linked to the text on that same page. I went to Utrecht University, determined to become a WWII historian'. Karel tells me that we first met on Thursday, November 18, 1986 at 10 a.m. (he keeps a meticulous diary) and he subsequently joined *After the Battle* in May 1992. His official 'mugging' was in Battipaglia, Italy, mine in Stoke Newington.** *Right:* **I took this photo (from a tripod) minutes later for my scrapbook.**

Back in issue 22 I included a piece on the 'Guns of the Great'. The sequence of photographs of Eisenhower, Churchill and Bradley firing an assortment of small arms intrigued me at the time but it was not until I carried out research for *D-Day Then and Now* that I was able to establish exactly where the sequence was taken. It took place during a pre-D-Day inspection tour but the only published account I could find — by General Bradley — failed to give a location: 'While visiting the 9th Division, Churchill confessed to an itch to try out the new American carbine. Targets were promptly put out for Churchill, Eisenhower, and me. Mine was handicapped at 75 yards, Eisenhower's at 50. The Prime Minister's was placed at 25 yards. We each fired 15 rounds in rapid succession. Manton Eddy wisely hustled us away before we could inspect the targets.'

The pictures were taken on March 24, 1944, and I managed to find the itinerary sheet for that day's events at the Imperial War Museum. However this simply gave the venue as 'Tidworth', the huge Army training area — then as now — in Wiltshire. So to Wiltshire I went with our long-time ETO expert, Roger Bell, armed with the complete set of pictures. I had already arranged with the Range Safety Officer at the School of Infantry at Warminster to be escorted onto the ranges to take the comparison for page 18 of Volume 1 of *D-Day Then and Now* so when we had finished, I asked if I could take a look at the other small-arms ranges in the area. Our driver, Alf Barber, was extremely helpful and knowledgeable of the local topography, and finally — as the comparisons show — we struck gold!

It's a lovely series of pictures and I wish I had room to include more. Over 20 years after I first saw them, I managed to track down where they were taken and, for the record, I enclose a map showing the location — Perham Down 'B' Small-Arms Range.

And this sortie gives me the excuse to formally introduce Roger Bell, dubbed our 'ETO expert' in early issues. I first met Roger at the Imperial War Museum in 1973 and his superior knowledge led me to lean heavily on his expertise and vast photo collection in the early years. He came with me to Holtzwihr to research the Audie Murphy story (issue 3) as he was then in touch with 'Spec' McClure, Audie's long-time friend, and accompanied me on other trips, notably to Remagen (issue 16), Lüneburg for the 30th anniversary of the surrender, and to Anzio (issue 52; see also issue 25, page 8) and Cassino (issue 13) where we had many laughs with our guide, Colonel John Green. Bearing in mind that D-Day was Roger's baby, he came with me on several of the photo shoots in 1994, of which the Warminster visit was a highlight.



The journeys of Peter and Margaret Thompson of Halifax, Yorkshire, have featured several times in these follow up articles as they retrace our footsteps across Europe. In June 1996 they motored down to Italy, to the Gran Sasso, where Skorzeny rescued Mussolini in 1943 (issue 22). 'We visited this by car driving up the 1968 Italian-built road to the summit. A new cable car system has been built which was opened in 1995, running parallel with the old one. The old lower cable car station now forms part of an hotel and serves as a function room. The original upper station is a restaurant and bar with the cable car and winding gear forming a small museum. The original pylon supports are still in situ up the mountain. The front of the Hotel Campo Imperatore has had a new circular entrance added. Outside, the paintwork is peeling off in places due to the ravages of the climate but the inside is quite well appointed. After showing ATB No. 22 to the receptionist, the manager was summoned and he invited us to view the Mussolini suite.

'The bedroom appears to have been altered since your visit in the 1970s and it is now the study complete with a book on the life of Mussolini displayed on the table; the study is now the bedroom. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay and, whilst having dinner in the restaurant in the evening (celebrating our 38th wedding anniversary), a wolf strolled past the window!'

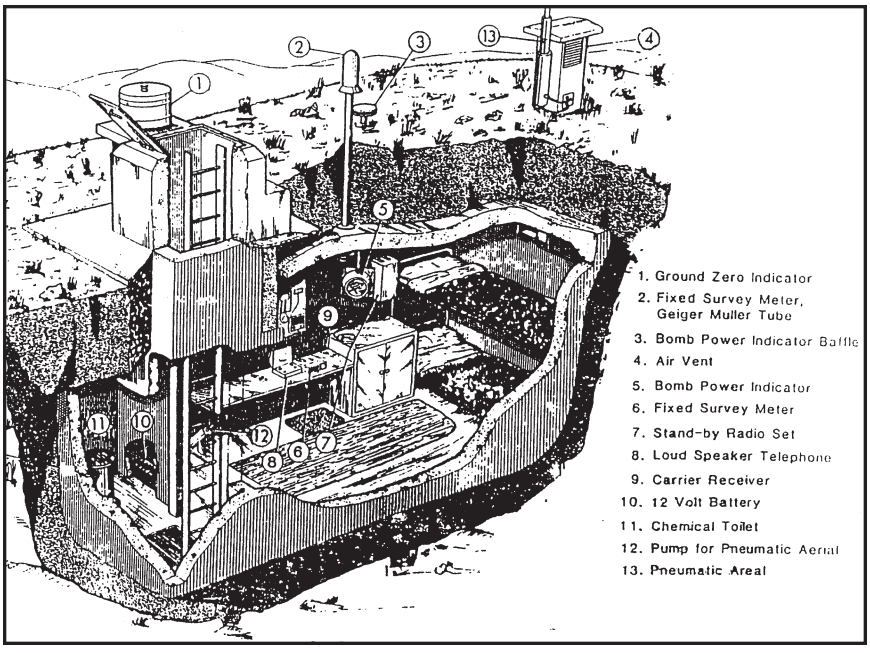
Very rarely do we have the opportunity to revisit the places featured in past issues so I am always extremely grateful to readers for keeping me up to date with changes. Peter Thompson sent me these views of the Hotel Campo Imperatore whose claim to fame was assured with Skorzeny's daring rescue of Mussolini. It was a story I really enjoyed doing for issue 22 in the company of my Italian friend Sergio Andreanelli who has lived in the UK for many years and who acted as interpreter. I had arranged a 'Fly-Drive' ticket but when we landed in Rome I suddenly discovered that I had left my driving licence at home. I tried to bluff it out with my passport but the girl would not buy it and, although Sergio had his licence with him, he had already warned me that he would not drive on the Italian roads under any circumstances. In the end, he agreed to drive the car from the forecourt whereupon I took the wheel although probably uninsured. But what the hell, an *After the Battle* story was at stake!

We will all have our favourite stories from the Second World War but I think the *Lady Be Good* (issue 25) stands supreme as a real 'after the battle' epic: the mystery of the aircraft that fails to return . . . its discovery years after the war . . . piecing together the heartrending attempt by the crew to reach civilisation . . . and now the recovery of the aircraft from the desert (issue 89). So the wheel turns full circle — as with so many of the incidents we have covered in the last 25 years.

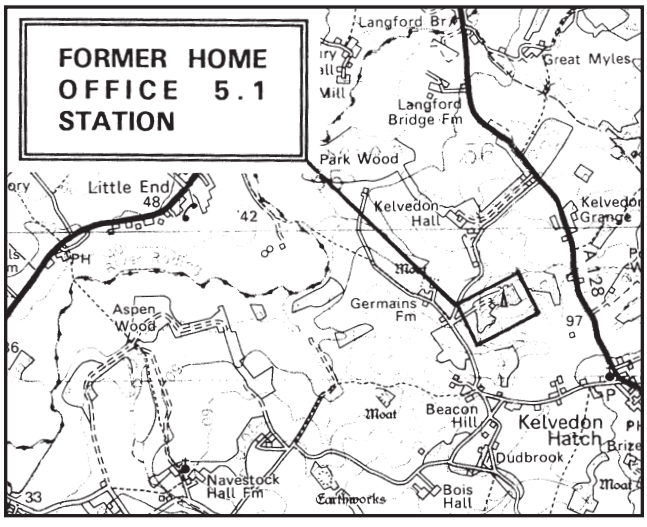
Just consider the Berlin Führerbunker. In 1973 when we began, the Iron Curtain was firmly in place and one could never have dreamed that not only within our lifetime would the whole edifice come tumbling down but that we would have the opportunity to explore the interior of the bunker (issues 61 and 62). And look at the mystery of what happened to the corpses after they were burned in the Chancellery garden — and how events unfolded with the departure of Soviet forces from East Germany (issue 77). Simply incredible!

And I am pleased when readers send me their own comparisons although I have had little opportunity to publish many of them. One magnificent pair that I have been saving up are these sent to me by Ludovic Meyer of La Madelène de Nonancourt in France. Look back at page 18 of issue 8 for the original shots. *Left:* **Trun, August 1986 with the same vehicle, a Stoewer 40 Kfz 2.** *Right:* **Same place, August 1991 with new hospital. 'Goodbye to our history', commented Ludovic sadly.**

A typical Royal Observer Corps' Warning and Monitoring Post the last of which were sold off in 1993. The ROC, which was set up during the war to report the approach of enemy aircraft, was charged with the secondary rôle of nuclear fall-out monitoring in May 1955, a task which eventually became its primary duty. Over 1,500 blast-proof underground observation posts were built, the first prototype at Farnham in Surrey being completed in May 1957. Each consisted of two rooms, one for a chemical toilet, the other a monitoring room. The ROC organisation was subjected to a drastic contraction in February 1968 when 686 posts were closed, finally being stood down at the end of 1991.


1. Ground Zero Indicator
2. Fixed Survey Meter, Geiger Muller Tube
3. Bomb Power Indicator Baffle
4. Air Vent
5. Bomb Power Indicator
6. Fixed Survey Meter
7. Stand-by Radio Set
8. Loud Speaker Telephone
9. Carrier Receiver
10. 12 Volt Battery
11. Chemical Toilet
12. Pump for Pneumatic Aerial
13. Pneumatic Areal

With the rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War, the UK government responded by dismantling some of Britain's defensive measures, notably the underground warning and monitoring organisation posts (UKWMOs) which would have been manned by the Royal Observer Corps to monitor radiation and fall-out in the event of a nuclear war. We put a bid in for one in our area although it was unsuccessful.



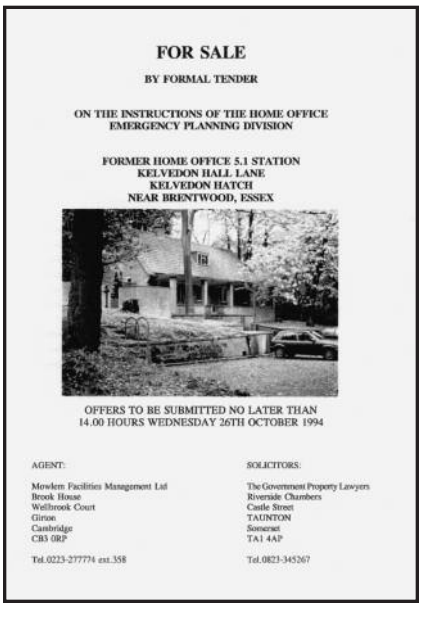
The secret in the forest. This secluded bungalow at Kelvedon, 25 miles north-east of London, disguised the entrance to the top secret Regional Seat of Government for the Metropolitan Area. Should the capital have been under attack from nuclear weapons, this would have been the nerve-centre from which the Government would have operated . . . or tried to! Reportedly costing £150 million to build at 1950 prices, it was sold to Michael Parrish on whose land it stands for a reported £100,000, surely the sale of the century! Michael has now opened the bunker to the public — details available on 01277 364883.

More interestingly though, was the sale of the top-secret Regional Seats of Government alluded to many years ago in Duncan Campbell's *War Plan UK* and Peter Laurie's *Beneath the City Streets.* Brief shots of the RSG at Kelvedon Hatch, near Brentwood, Essex, were included in a television documentary in the CND era critising the inadequacy of the Government's 'Protect and Survive' policy in the event of a nuclear war, and I recognised the tell-tale bungalow which disguised the secret entrance.

My interest in the bunker came about in an unusual way. When we started publishing Airfield Plans in the 1970s, I obtained the master list of all those which had been released to the RAF Museum at Hendon, and was intrigued to find one listed as 'R4 Kelvedon'. Realising what it was (and deciding to forgo the huge sum I could probably have obtained for selling a copy to the Soviets), I advised the museum authorities and it was quietly withdrawn. I could just imagine the hot water I could have landed myself in had I been found with my camera and a copy of the plan in my car when I later visited Kelvedon to view the exterior from outside the perimeter fence!

The three-storey bunkers were originally built in the 1950s as Control and Reporting Centres for the ROTOR Early Warning System which replaced the wartime Chain Home radar system, and the Kelvedon bunker was manned by National Servicemen bussed in from North Weald airfield, some six miles away. All told, four bunkers were built, the others being located at Box, Shipton, and Bawburgh. By the 1960s, and the development of more-sophisticated early-warning systems, the bunker was no longer needed as a Fighter Command Operations Centre and it was converted into an RSG for the Metropolitan Area. Here, deep underground, with supplies of food and water for eight weeks, a Regional Commissioner would have co-ordinated the survival and recovery operations for London after a nuclear blast.

In 1994, the RSGs together with 13 other nuclear bunkers were offered for sale, the Kelvedon bunker being purchased by the Parrish family who once owned the land on which it stood. Unfortunately, the interior had been stripped bare of all its fixtures and fittings, unlike some of the other sites which were sold much as they had been left.



FOR SALE

BY FORMAL TENDER

ON THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE HOME OFFICE EMERGENCY PLANNING DIVISION

FORMER HOME OFFICE 5.1 STATION
KELVEDON HALL LANE
KELVEDON HATCH
NEAR BRENTWOOD, ESSEX

OFFERS TO BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN
14.00 HOURS WEDNESDAY 26TH OCTOBER 1994

AGENT:

Mowlem Facilities Management Ltd
Brook House
Wellbrook Court
Girton
Cambridge
CB3 0RP

Tel.0223-277774 ext.358

SOLICITORS:

The Government Property Lawyers
Riverside Chambers
Castle Street
TAUNTON
Somerset
TA1 4AP

Tel.0823-345267

Images of war. They say that a photograph is worth more than a thousand words and it has always been my intention to try to let the photos in *After the Battle* tell the story. However, the cost of reproducing a photograph has risen dramatically over the years although I have never counted the cost of producing the magazine, believing that history must be told whatever the price. (A picture like this from a press agency now costs more than £30 to publish.)

And what about favourite photos. Each of us will have been moved, perhaps surprised, or cheered, or saddened over a particular image from the war, and of course it is difficult to single out just one shot as it all depends on one's mood at the time. However, there is one picture which has always made me smile, ever since Wilf Nicoll came across it during his picture research for me on *The Battle of Britain Then and Now,* although I did not use it until Volume 2 of *The Blitz Then and Now* (page 164). Taken at Northolt aerodrome in 1940, it is the ingratiatingly smile-cum-leer on the face of the chap on the left which, to me, epitomises the 'Brylcreem Boys' (as RAF personnel were called) of those days.

Follow up to issue 26. In 1979, we published Jean Paul's account of Operation 'Pimento' and the subsequent escape of the pilot, Frank Griffiths, following the crash of his Halifax in Meythet. The other six crewmen died in the crash along with five French civilians, and in September 1994, JP pictured the unveiling of a memorial to their memory erected on the actual crash site. Frank Griffiths passed away two years later.

Follow up to issue 27. 'To the memory of 43 soldiers of the Waffen-SS murdered on this spot on April 29, 1945 after having laid down their arms.' In 1990, a memorial cross was erected at Webling causing much controversy as I recounted in issue 72, page 46. This was removed (issue 80, page 20) but when Karel revisited the spot in September 1997, a new 'private' memorial was in place beside the main road repeating the original text.

In February 1997, I received a letter from Frank Smith of Barnard Castle, Durham, and am grateful to him for telling me the full story of the Changi Gate which I omitted to mention in issue 31 on Singapore.

'Cedric Pickersgill was a Barnard Castle man prior to WWII and a qualified architect who worked for the local council. At the outbreak of hostilities he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers serving with No. 287 Field Company which eventually arrived in Singapore to form part of the 18th Division. Capture for this unit came on Sunday, 15th February, 1942 and Captain Pickersgill, along with members of his unit, were imprisoned at Changi. During his time there he sought permission from his captors to erect a monumental lych gate at the entrance to the British war dead cemetery. Surprisingly, permission was given but neither tools nor materials were made available. Not to be daunted, the timber came from huts, the nails were fashioned from barbed wire, and the tools were made using stone age technology.

'The gate was dismantled in 1945 when the cemetery was re-landscaped and stored until 1952 when it was re-erected outside St George's Church in Tanglin Barracks, Singapore, but was taken down again when the British Far East HQ was closed down less than a year later. It was shipped to England in 1971 and was re-erected at Bassingbourn Barracks, near Royston, in 1972.

'Captain Pickersgill died of malaria and is buried at Changi and just last year (1996) I met his aging daughter. She told me that she believed that her father knew that he would not survive to return home and that the gate was her little piece of worship. She had searched everywhere for a photo of the gate at Changi and it was only when I discovered your magazine that I saw a picture of it in issue 31 where it is visible on the right of the picture on page 24. To say that she was pleased when I gave her a laser copy of the photo is an understatement and it is due in part to your magazine that I was able to bring a little happiness to her life.'

Changi in Cambridgeshire. The gate which once stood at Singapore now re-erected at Bassingbourn Barracks just north of Royston.

From Belgium . . . to Northern Ireland. *Above:* **One of the Belgian camps described by John Quinn: the Field Ambulance Park at Seapatrick.** *Below:* **Today this housing estate occupies the site on the Kilpike road at Banbridge.**

John Quinn of Newtownabbey, County Antrim (in Northern Ireland featured in issue 34), kindly sent me a copy of his book *From Ulster to Normandy*. At the same time, he brought my attention to something I was unaware of: that after the liberation of Belgium in 1944, 25,000 Belgian soldiers — four infantry brigades — were sent to Northern Ireland for training. 'The intention was to return the men to take part in the final battles in Germany,' explained John, 'but with the German surrender in May 1945 they were not destined for active service. However, the brigades did return to Europe, not to fight in Germany, but as the seeds of a new post-war army of Belgium. It is in a way appropriate that Northern Ireland should be the place that was chosen for this new army to take shape for it was the Irish Guards 2nd Battalion (then a mechanised regiment) as part of the 32nd Brigade of the Guards Armoured Division who spearheaded the drive into Brussels, being met by an overwhelming mass of deliriously happy Belgians. The scene in Brussels on the night of September 3, 1944 could probably only ever be appreciated or fully described by those who were there.

'Another Irish Regiment, the 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, as part of the 7th Armoured Division, had crossed into Belgium at Troufflers on August 31, 1944 and within six days had swept forward to liberate Ghent (see issue 94) and in so doing took the surrender of a whole infantry regiment. So it was fitting that Ireland would continue its rôle in that libertion and play host to the new soldiers of Belgium.

'When the Belgians first arrived in Northern Ireland, several road signs were erected in French and Flemish to direct the soldiers to their respective camps. The 3rd Infantry Brigade moved into camps in South Antrim, whilst the 4th, known as "Steenstraete", was based in and around Banbridge. The 5th Infantry Brigade, "Mere Kems", deployed in County Armagh. The main contingent of the 4th Infantry Brigade were based at Seapatrick on the Kilpike road. A private housing estate rests on the original campsite today. Another billet was Bells Hemstitching factory which was located at the bottom of the Five Lights Hill; it is presently being demolished. The brigade's repair shops were sited amongst a concentration of army installations on the Lurgan side of Burnhouse factory two miles from Lisburn. Other units were stationed in Gilford Castle, and on the present site of Bannvale Adult Training Centre on the Stramore Road.

'The Belgians left an indelible impression on the people of Banbridge. Several large parades took place in the town, and one on May 9, 1945 saw some 4,000 soldiers parade to celebrate VE-Day. At 3 p.m., having assembled at points on the Newry Road, the 4th Infantry Brigade marched past a saluting base at the air raid shelter near the north end of Bridge Street, the salute being taken by Colonel Louppe. The music was played by the local Milltown Brass and Reed Band.'

VE-Day — the 4th Infantry Brigade parade on Bridge Street with their commander Colonel Louppe on the stand.

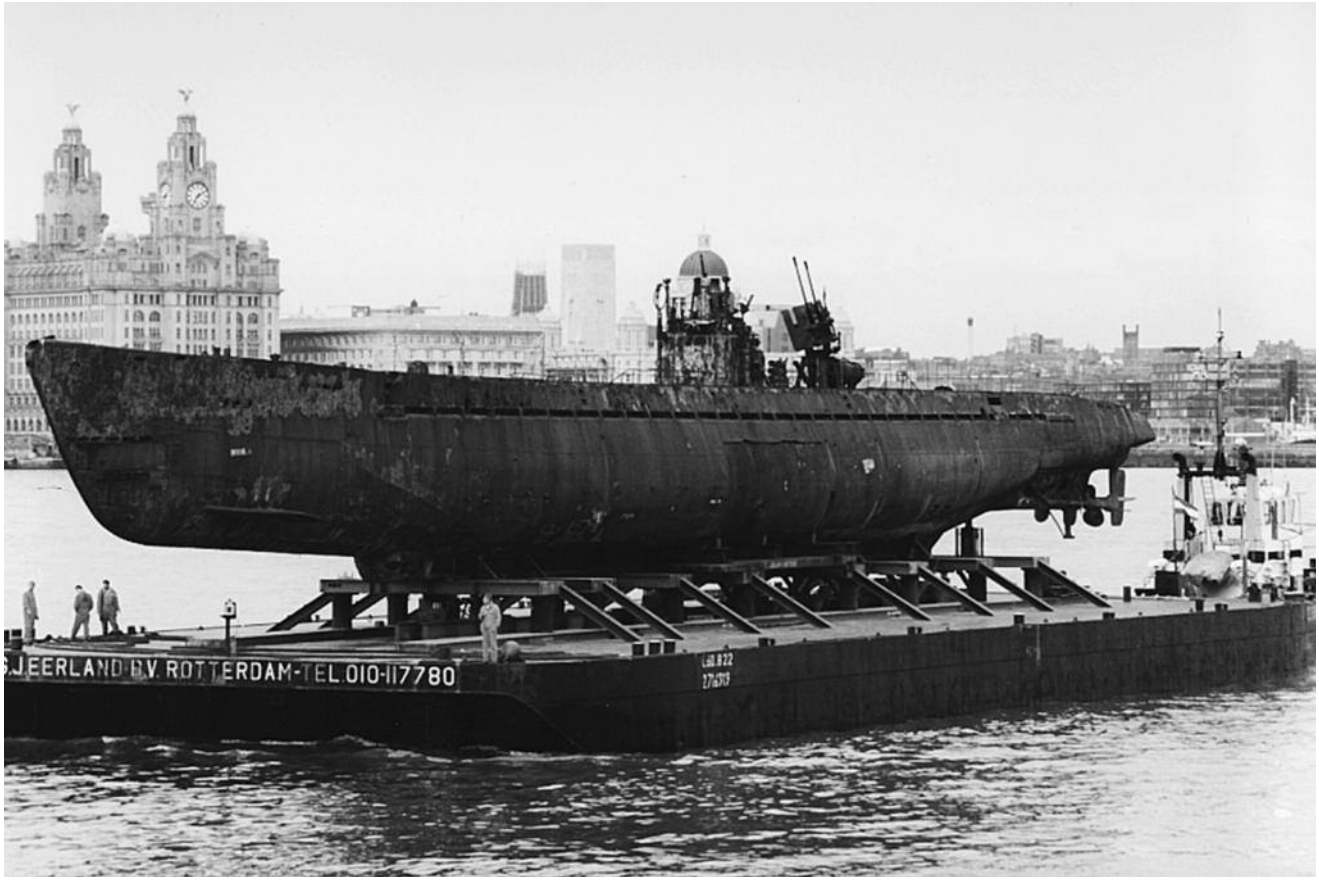
In issue 32, I recounted the story of the first Commando raid of the war carried out on Guernsey in July 1940. Just last year, David List, who carries out research for us at the Public Record Office (see also issue 98), was looking through some papers on Combined Operations when he chanced on this item in a 1943 file. It was something that neither of us had ever heard of let alone seen before: the Commandos 'calling card' to be left behind as a frightener but there was no indication as to whether it had ever been used.

Paul Brickhill, *Reach for the Sky:* 'First he [Bader] was surprised, and then terrifyingly shocked to see that the whole of the Spitfire behind the cockpit was missing: fuselage, tail, fin — all gone. . . . The second 109 must have run into him and sliced it off with its propeller. He tore his helmet and mask off and yanked the little rubber ball over his head — the hood ripped away and screaming noise battered at him. Out came the harness pin and he gripped the cockpit rim to lever himself up, wondering if he could get out without thrust from the helpless legs. He struggled madly to get his head above the windscreen and suddenly felt he was being sucked out as the tearing wind caught him. Top half out. He was out! No, something had him by the leg holding him. (The rigid foot of the right leg hooked fast in some vise in the cockpit.) Then the nightmare took his exposed body and beat him and screamed and roared in his ears as the broken fighter dragging him by the leg plunged down and spun and battered him and the wind clawed at his flesh and the cringing sightless eyeballs'. . . .
Above: **Dilip and his recovery team. And so the search for Bader's Spitfire goes on.**

In issue 35, Trevor Popple told the story of the making of *Reach for the Sky* based on the life of Douglas Bader. When Bader was shot down over France in August 1941, he had to leave his artificial legs jammed under the pedals in the cockpit when he baled out; hence, discovery of the wreckage of Bader's Spitfire would be a major coup for wreckology enthusiasts and over the years I have heard of several people looking for the crash site. However, the search area, somewhere in the region of St Omer, covers many square miles yet this has not deterred Dilip Sarkar of Worcester from undertaking the quest. When early in 1996 he traced a possible site, the press immediately jumped to conclusions but, as Dilip explained, 'as one could expect, the subsequent reporting was largely inaccurate. When the word slipped out, we confirmed that we had a site under investigation. All the press wanted, however, was "Bader's Plane Found in French Field" so that was that! When we recovered the substantial remains of a Spitfire Mk IX, we were certainly disappointed but, in view of the total lack of contemporary documentary evidence and number of crashed aircraft in the vicinity, we were not surprised. The media then headlined the story that Johnnie Johnson was against our plans in any case, which was patently untrue as JEJ was very much a part of our planning team! Having studied in minute detail the aerial combat of August 9th, 1941, when DB was brought down, we can only say that the collision theory, whilst unlikely, remains inconclusive, as were the German combat reports at the time. In view of the confused circumstances of this fight involving nearly 100 fighters, and considering the drastic overclaiming of the Tangmere Wing, the possibility of 'friendly fire' could not be ignored. Although I was concerned at how the press would report on that particularly, in fact it was handled quite reasonably which surprised us all!'

In May 1996, press reports announced details of a project to raise the U-Boats scuttled in the Atlantic in Operation 'Deadlight' (see issue 36 and issue 92, page 42). It seems that Jack Waite, a Cheshire businessman, had purchased the salvage rights to the submarines from the Ministry of Defence although the US Pentagon came out strongly against any reneging on the wartime agreement between the Allies that the German U-Boat fleet be destroyed. While the scrap value of each U-Boat was estimated at around £400,000, Jack Waite's view was that some should be made available to museums and theme parks, adding that there were no U-Boats on display in Britain. However, since then, nothing further has been heard of the proposal.

The jetty at Lisahally where the U-Boats were tied up prior to being towed to a watery grave in the Atlantic (issue 36). Rather appropriately, this memorial, modelled on the hexagonal stones of the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim, has now been dedicated to all those who died in the Battle of the Atlantic.



At that time, his claim was true although ten days later a U-Boat *was* put on show in Britain — the *U-534*, raised from off the Danish coast in August 1993 (issue 83). The follow up in issue 92, page 42, left the story with the U-Boat's fate still undecided but since then the Danish magnate, Karsten Ree, whose bill to raise the wreck is now reportedly £3 million, had decided to base his proposed Nautilus Project at Birkenhead near Liverpool instead of in Denmark. The *U-534* is to be the forerunner of a very ambitious project to raise other sunken vessels including a destroyer and a D-Day landing craft.

U-Boat across the Mersey! May 1996: Danish magnate Karsten Ree, who spent a reported £3 million raising the *U-534,* switched his proposed Nautilus Project from Denmark to Birkenhead. The arrival of the U-Boat followed talks with the Warship Preservation Trust, chaired by Sir Philip Goodhart (seen *below* giving the sub an enthusiastic welcome) and Wirral Council. With Sir Philip is the project co-ordinator, Stig Thornsohn. He disclosed that other warships sunk in Danish waters had been located for salvage. 'It is a very ambitious project involving other vessels and possibly a museum dedicated to diving, and the arrival of the *U-534* will prove to be the catalyst for the whole thing.' Sir Philip explained that there were hopes of securing a destroyer and a landing craft. 'We are proceeding step-by-step', he explained. 'This is something which will happen over many years and our immediate activities will, primarily, be devoted to the *U-534.*' After a two-week journey from Grenaa, Denmark, masterminded by the Dutch firms Van Seumeren and Smit-Tak, tugs pulled the barge carrying the submarine through the Alfred Lock before it was lifted onto dry land.

'I am hoping that in the not too distant future it may be possible to open a copy of the magazine and see included an article relating to the Royal Signals Special Communications Units and their work relating to Bletchley Park and Ultra,' wrote Wilf Neal from Castle Bromwich. 'Much has been written in the past about Ultra, but little or nothing relating to the SCU's and their work in gathering and distributing the Ultra intelligence.

'In October 1943, I was called up into the Royal Corps of Signals as it was then and joined the training wing of No. 1 Special Communications Unit at Manor Farm, Little Horwood, about six miles outside Bletchley where of course GCHQ was located at that time (your issue 37). After six weeks basic training and morse instruction, I was posted to Special Communications Unit (SCU) 7, on the same site and then to SCU 8, also same site. SCU 7 was a further training unit producing competent radio operators and SCU 8 was the unit which embraced the personnel and outstations that were attached to the various command headquarters that operated in Europe after the invasion.

'During May, I spent four to five weeks with US Ninth Air Force TAC at Bushy Park and I'm certain I can identify the hut we occupied during our stay, this being shown as building No. 3 near Gate 2 on page 18 of issue 84. Initially, we were quartered in the huts in Chestnut Avenue but when these were taken over by WACs we moved into the hut where our radio station was located. There was a small PX at the one end of the hut. This was partitioned off and I believe they only sold small bottles of Coke at restricted times but our requirements were passed to us over the top of the partition — paid for of course! We ate with the US personnel, the mess being, as I recall, on the left-hand side of Chestnut Avenue about half-way down going in the direction of Hurst Park.

'Around June 8th 1944, I was posted to the US Third Army HQ at Knutsford where, with six other Royal Signals personnel and a similar number of RAF officers and sergeants, we formed a Special Liaison Unit receiving traffic from Bletchley Park which was transmitted from the SCU Control Station at Whaddon Hall, near Bletchley. The RAF people worked in great secrecy and it was not until the publication of F. W. Winterbotham's book *The Ultra Secret* in the mid-1970s that I was aware of the nature of our work.

Outside the guard room at Manor Farm, Little Horwood, Buckinghamshire, where Wilf Neal began his career with the Royal Signals Special Communication Units some 50-odd years previously. With Wilf (in the centre) are two ex-service colleagues, Ken Jones (left) and Alf Johnson.

'On June 29th we moved down to Breamore House, near Salisbury, and on July 5th boarded the Liberty ship *J. F. Steffen* at Southampton and ended up at the orchard in Nehou on the 8th. Once Third Army was activated at the beginning of August, we left Nehou and moved every four or five days to new positions, always in fields or woods. At the end of September, things became more stable and we spent longer periods in various locations such as Etain (Meuse), Nancy, Luxembourg City, Oberstein in Germany, crossing the Rhine at Mainz, then Frankfurt, Hersfeld and Erlangen, seeing the end of the war at Regensburg.

'Apart from one week in Luxembourg, when we closed and amalgamated with an SLU attached to Ninth TAC who were also in the city, our station was in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all the way from Knutsford to Regensburg.'

The campaign to preserve Britain's wartime code-breaking headquarters has taken a new twist since the application by the Bletchley Park Trust for lottery cash was turned down (see issue 92, page 51). Now it appears that the Government never had legal title to the property in the first place as it was purchased privately by Sir Hugh Sinclair — the head of MI6 in 1937 — because of prevarication between the War Office, Foreign Office and Admiralty over whose budget should bear the cost. He personally provided the £7,500 being asked by Sir George Leon for the estate, which then became 'Station X', and it would seem that the Government failed to reimburse Sir Hugh. Therefore, when he died soon afterwards, theoretically the property should have passed to his heir but the war intervened and Bletchley Park was used in turn by the Ministry of Aviation and the General Post Office, the Government in 1984 actually selling British Telecom those parts the GPO had been using for £2.3 million!

In 1994, Wilf made a nostalgic return visit to France . . . to the orchard at Nehou where Patton's Third Army headquarters had been camped . . . and where he had spent most of July 1944. Today, only a solitary apple tree remains from the original orchard. This memorial stone is inscribed with the General's immortal words: 'Do not take counsel of your fears'.

With issue 40 literally in hand, three of our French readers revisit Budapest to picture the changes since the demise of communism. *Left:* **Richard Hesslinger, Luc Braeuer and his brother Marc, on the banks of the Danube with the Burgberg in the background. Major Prinz Schönburg stood here in 1944 and Jean Paul in 1983 (page 9).** *Right:* **Luc and Marc in front of the building pictured on page 18, then under repair.**

Luc and Marc Braeuer, both founders of the Heimdal Librairie, the best-stocked militaria bookshop in Paris, have visited several battlefields of the Eastern Front. In 1995, they travelled to Poland and Kaliningrad (ex-Königsberg), and to the three Baltic states in the spring of 1996. In the summer of that year, they decided to visit Hungary and, with issue 40 in hand, they visited Budapest and the area near Lake Balaton where Operation 'Frühlingserwachen' (Spring Awakening) — the last German offensive of the war — had been fought in the spring of 1945. Yet, as the brothers told us, 'the trip was somewhat disappointing. Although free from the travel restrictions in place under the communist regime, of Operation "Spring Awakening" near Lake Balaton we saw absolutely nothing: no trace of the battle and no items of interest in the local antique dealers.

'We then went on to Budapest where we found ourselves trapped in the same traffic congestion as one gets at home. In the centre of the town, the hotels are now expensive, but they are numerous so one has a choice. We saw several buildings still showing bullet marks but could not ascertain whether these shots were fired in 1944 or in 1956 when the Soviets took control of the city. We enjoyed our visit to the Burgberg where all of the places shown in Jean Paul's story in 1983 can still be seen. Some of the buildings, like the one shown on page 18, have been restored since his visit. Also, the dissolution of the regime is clearly evident in the new comparisons we took: many more cars, advertisement hoardings and much more colour.'

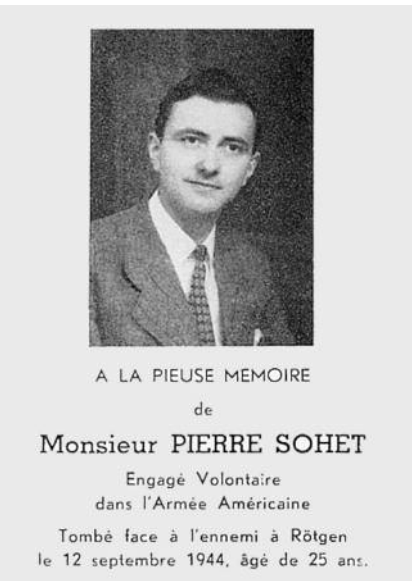
'I've been a subscriber since the first issue of *After the Battle* and I enjoy each story', wrote Paul Ludwig from Seattle in July 1996. 'Before I retired as a 747 Captain with Northwest Airlines in 1994, I had a three-day layover on Saipan as part of a long Orient trip. I took advantage and rented a car to tour Saipan battlefields on the first day, then flew as a passenger on a single-engined island commuter aircraft to Tinian.

Tinian, forever associated with the operation to drop the atomic bomb. Today, visitors arrive on the island at the civilian airport near West Field to be greeted by this comforting display of aircraft wreckage outside the terminal building.

'As a 40-year veteran as a pilot, it has always impressed me that North Base on Tinian was once the world's largest and busiest airfield. For that reason — and for its history associated with the dropping of the atomic bomb (see issue 41) — Tinian's North Field deserves more than has been written about it previously.

'My first destination on Tinian was North Field and I took a lot of color photos of the most obvious remaining parts, such as the runways, a former Japanese administration building, and the two atom bomb pits. The jungle has overgrown most of what is there including two of the four runways. It was amazing to me, and still is, that the base was so large and busy, and has to rank at the top in those categories. I would guess that present-day commercial airports may be larger and busier, but this is today, not 1945.'

Above: **The ruin of the air operations building at North Field, Tinian, pictured in 1994 by Paul Ludwig.** *Right:* **The two atomic bomb loading bays have been tidied up since we illustrated them on page 24 of issue 41.**



Different time . . . same place. *Left:* **Henri Scuvee (I misspelled his name on page 5 of issue 42 which was copied from the original wartime caption) kindly motored back to Roetgen with his grand-daughter to have this historic photograph taken for me.** *Right:* **How could one not publish a picture of a fallen hero — Pierre Sohet, killed September 12, 1944.**

'A couple of years ago, a former pupil of mine showed me a copy of *After the Battle* 42', wrote Henri Scuvee from Liège, Belgium, 'and there on the top of page 5 was a picture of me in a Jeep at Roetgen railway station in September 1944. Roetgen was actually captured on September 12, but on page 3 and on page 5 it is said that it was on September 10. This error is, however, negligible when compared with the numberless sons, brothers and fathers killed by mistake in this just and necessary war.

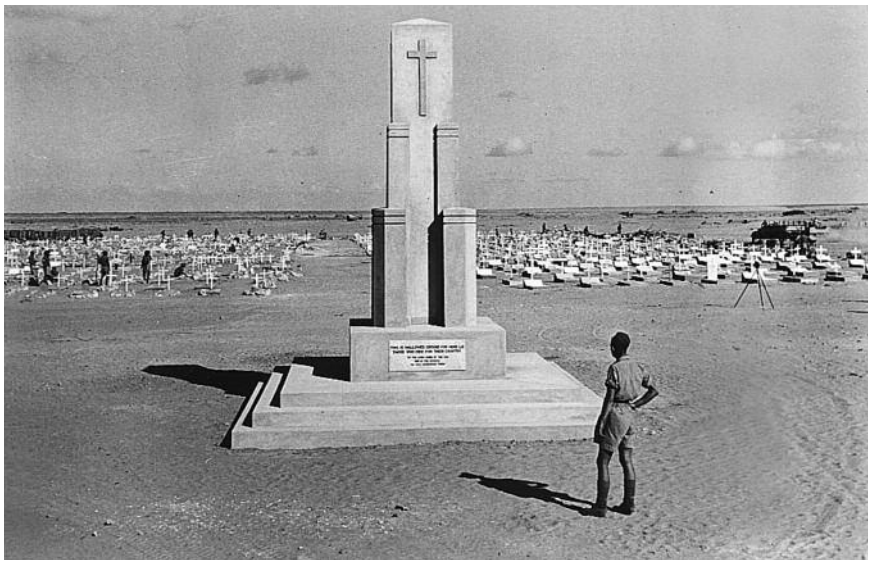
'September 12, 1944 was a glorious autumn day like Keats would have described. Young German women were picking plums in orchards, Wilfred Owen only could have evoked the pervading smell of hot petrol and the incessant drone of the engines. He would also have been aware of the chasm between nature and man-made war.

'I revisited Roetgen in March 1997 and I am sending you two pictures of me with my grand-daughter on the same spot. I am also enclosing a picture of Pierre Sohet, the other Belgian in Task Force Lovelady, who was killed by a sniper in Roetgen. He will not have known the fears nor the joys of being a grandfather. If you could also publish his photograph or at least mention his name, his two surviving sisters, who are spinsters, would be deeply moved.'

Bob Fleming of Retford, Nottinghamshire, who will be more familiar to readers of *Wheels & Tracks* due to his extensive involvement with military vehicles, phoned me in September 1996 on his return from Russia. We have all heard horror stories concerning the free-for-all stampede after military relics from the former Soviet Union (see issue 80, page 17) but it now appears that there are no holds barred, the Stug on the memorial reproduced on the cover of issue 50 having now been stolen!

'In *After the Battle* No. 51, on page 14, there was a photograph of the Royal Australian Engineers memorial at Tobruk', explained Dr Steve Dyer in a letter to me from Downer, ACT, Australia, in December 1996. 'The "Rats of Tobruk Memorial" was unveiled on April 13, 1983 and is a replica of the one erected in Tobruk in 1941 and incorporates the original marble inscription stone repatriated to Australia after the war. The major changes are the bronze rendition of an eternal flame on the central column and a symbolic presentation of the defence perimeter of Tobruk around the base.'

Below: **'This is hallowed ground for here lie those who died for their country.' So reads the wording on the marble plaque preserved from the 'Rats of Tobruk' memorial dedicated in October 1941 in the cemetery constructed by Royal Australian Engineers. The stone was originally one of the steps of the Tobruk Post Office.**

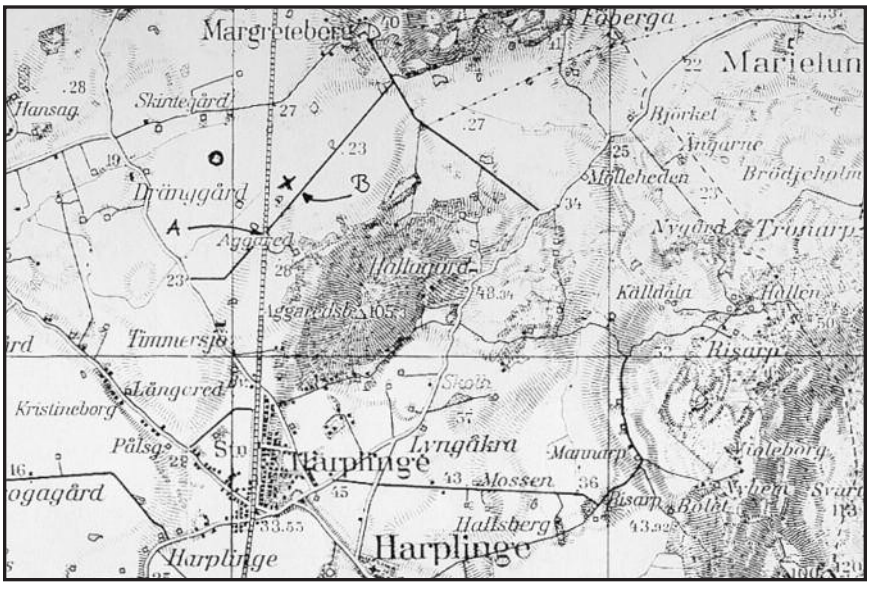


Crash site investigation by Par Nilsson. *Left:* **Photo 'A' and** *right* **photo 'B'. The Mosquito crashed at position 'X'.**

Par Nilsson, who is a regular correspondent, contacted me in July 1996: 'You may recall that I wrote to you last year on the subject of a Mosquito that participated in the Aarhus attack (issue 54) and subsequently crashed near my home town, Halmstad, in southern Sweden. Since then I have been able to find out more about the event, and I have also visited the crash site.

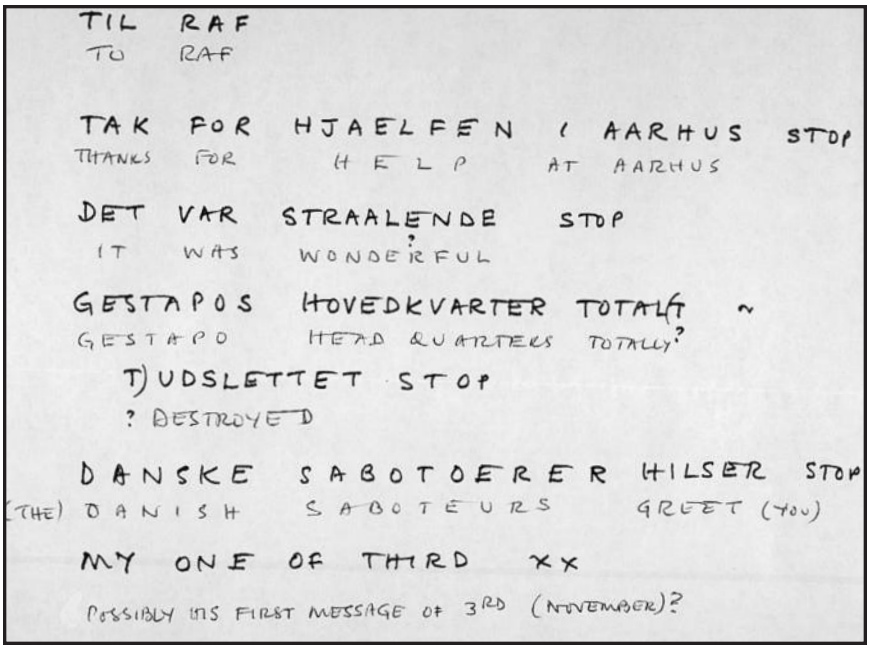
'The RAF attack on Gestapo's Jutland HQ in Aarhus, Denmark, took place on October 31, 1944. Mosquito PZ164, a Mk VI from No. 487 (RNZAF) Squadron piloted by Wing Commander W. L. Thomas with Flight Lieutenant P. R. Humphrey-Baker as navigator, was damaged by bomb blast and set course for Sweden. At about noon local time, the aircraft was seen (and heard) circling at low level over the village of Harplinge, some 12 kilometres north-west of Halmstad. Only one engine was running; the other fell off shortly before the Mosquito belly-landed in a nearby field. The crew members escaped unscathed, and set fire to the aircraft which was completely destroyed. Thomas and Humphrey-Baker were taken to Margreteberg Farm where they were given something to eat and an opportunity to rest while the Home Guard stood guard outside. Both airmen said very little at the subsequent interrogation. A few days later, they boarded a train bound for Falun and internment, and tried to escape during a stop in Göteborg. One of the airmen (my sources do not say which one) had told locals in Harplinge that his wife had given birth to a son the previous day; this may (at least partially) explain the escape attempt. They were both caught, however. Preparations for their return to England were begun in late November 1944.

'The attached maps show the crash site and the surrounding area. The original map was given to me by Hugo Martensson, a farmer who witnessed the crash from the position marked "O". The Mosquito crashed at "X". I visited the site on April 6, 1996. Photo "A" was taken from the position marked "A", looking north along what used to be the railway to Göteborg. The old track was removed and a new dual track laid a few kilometres further inland in the late 1980s, but the position of the old track is still faintly visible and, at the far end of the field, a short stretch of remaining embankment confirmed that this was the correct location. Photo "B" was taken from a slightly different position, marked "B" on the map, looking north-west. The crash site is at the centre of this photo. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any contemporary photos, and thus there are no comparisons. The local newspaper, *Hallandsposten,* wrote about the crash, but apparently the burned wreck was not deemed worthy of photography, and private photos have yet to surface. Given the scarcity of cameras among common people at the time, it may well be that no such photos exist.'



A very pertinent point regarding this attack was raised by Alan Stripp, the noted Cambridge historian on Ultra (and who also wrote the introduction when it was re-issued in 1996 to Ewen Montagu's *The Man Who Never Was).*

'On page 49 of issue 54 is a remark which I feel certain that someone else, better placed than I, will have written to correct: the caption for the "coded message" should have read "A *decrypt* received by London". If I may explain, the enciphered signal most certainly used a one-time-pad, and since these had to be worked very carefully so as not to mis-align the columns, this could well explain the errors. I attach the original text — with one or two possible errors on my part as I have no Danish.'



The commemoration of servicemen executed for civilian crimes on the Brookwood Memorial to the Missing is somewhat of a sore point with me; not only because I do not feel they have earned the right to be included on a war memorial, but also because they are not 'missing' in the accepted sense of the word as their graves lie within the perimeter of the prisons in which they were executed. Some may even now have been repatriated to their families as was permitted with the ending of the death penalty in Britain. I went on camera at Brookwood in 1984 for Thames News to explain my feelings and since then Matthew Spicer has found that the commemoration of murderers is even more prolific than the three names I found for issue 45.

And Jan Hey brought my attention to the fact that an American serviceman, originally buried in the US 'dishonoured' plot at Brookwood (issue 59), now has a grave at Cambridge. I asked Professor Bob Lilley (see issue 90) for an explanation and he said that Private Gibson, accidently shot while in custody, was deemed to have died in the line of duty.

Matthew Spicer of Slough, Berkshire, has carried out detailed research into capital punishment in the British Isles including wartime executions of servicemen. Readers will recall how upset I was when investigating the story on the murder of Leading Aircraftwoman Miriam Deeley for issue 45 to find that her killer had his name inscribed on the Brookwood Memorial to the Missing. I will not go into all the arguments again because I gave these at length in issue 50, page 3, but Matthew has now found that at least another dozen wartime murderers have their names carved in stone at Brookwood: Private David Jennings of the South Lancs Regiment, executed in Dorchester Prison on July 24, 1941; Lance Corporal Frederick Austin of the RASC (Bristol, April 30, 1942); Lance Corporal Walter Clayton, The Cameronians, (Bristol, August 7, 1946); Private Cyril Johnson, West Yorks Regiment, (Wandsworth, April 15, 1942); Private August Sangret, Royal Canadian Infantry Corps, (Wandsworth, April 29, 1943); Corporal Dudley Rayner, Pioneer Corps, (Wandsworth, March 31, 1943); Private Charles Raymond, 5th Infantry Brigade Company, (Wandsworth, July 10, 1943); Private Charles Gauthier, Le Régiment de Quebec, (Wandsworth, September 24, 1943); Private Terence Casey, RAMC, (Wandsworth, November 19, 1943); Private Mervin McEwan, RCOC, (Armley, February 3, 1944); Sergeant Ernest Digby, Royal Artillery, (Bristol, March 16, 1944); Private John Davidson, RAOC, (Walton, July 12, 1944); Private Horace Gordon, RCOC, (Wandsworth, January 9, 1945); and Private Arthur Thompson, General Service Corps, (Armley, January 31, 1945).

At the same time, Matthew has discovered that there are over 20 other servicemen, executed for murder during the war, whose names do *not* appear on the memorial, so the explanation of equality given me by the Under-Secretary of State in 1985 rather falls by the wayside.

I must reiterate that none of the argument reflects on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who acted solely on those details supplied by the various Service ministeries as to which casualties were to be commemorated. The Commission is not involved and does not know the precise cause of death for any of the names it commemorates. The cock-up occured by the Services not being consistent in discharging the individual the day before his execution.

As far as the American dishonoured dead are concerned (see issue 59), Jan Hey of Hengelo, Holland, has discovered that there was a 19th burial in Plot X at Brookwood: Private Robert Gibson in Row 2, Grave 8. Jan was very surprised to find that he was now buried in the US Military Cemetery at Cambridge (Plot E-2-93) because all the executed dead were either moved to the dishonoured plot at Oise-Aisne in France or repatriated (see issue 72, page 44, and issue 90).

I raised this with Professor Bob Lilley (see issue 90) who explained that Gibson, of Company A of the 307th Airborne Engineers Battalion, was convicted of striking a superior officer and confined at the Loire Disciplinary Training Center at Le Mans, France. On March 20, 1946, while in the Southampton Port of Embarkation Stockade, he was fatally wounded by the accidental discharge of a guard's rifle. Because he was a general prisoner, he was temporarily interred among the dishonoured at Brookwood, but the military authorities held that his death was in the line of duty so he was later buried at Cambridge.

At the risk of incurring some criticism, I could not resist including these pictures I took at the US Military Cemetery in 1978. *Left:* I wanted to picture the grave of Private Crossland who was shot in the mutiny at Bamber Bridge (issue 22) and Wilf Nicoll and my son Gordon accompanied me to Cambridge. A split-second after I pressed the shutter, a sprinkler, which was watering the lush grass, suddenly swung round catching us all and my finger involuntarily took the second shot!

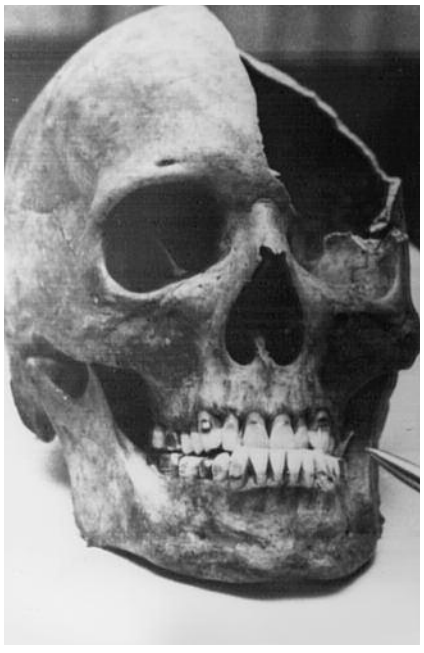
A different view has surfaced concerning the British servicemen shot in the First World War in summary executions on the field of battle. The first man to be 'rehabilitated' was Lance Sergeant Stones — added to the town war memorial at Crook, County Durham, in 1997.

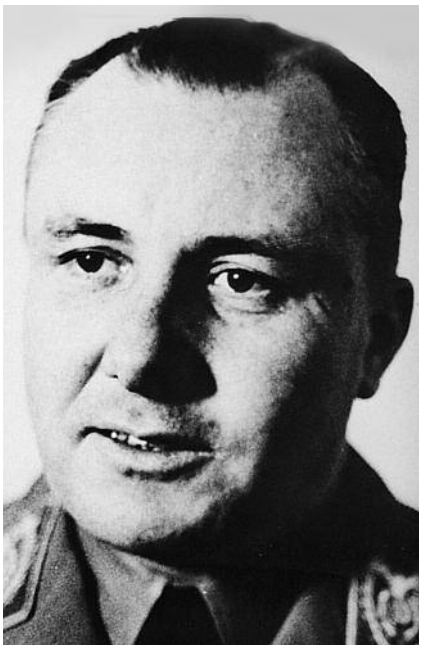
An interesting contrast was provided in May 1997 when the new Labour Government announced that they were considering pardoning over 300 British soldiers shot in the First World War for cowardice. I highlighted this controversy in issue 66, page 41, after the publication of Anthony Babington's book *For the Sake of Example.* The Conservative Government's line, as given by Prime Minister John Major (see issue 80, page 3) was that one could not put today's standards on yesterday's judgements, but with the change of Government came a change in attitudes.

Within four weeks of the announcement, Councillors in Crook, County Durham, acted to pre-empt the pardons by deciding that a local man, Lance Sergeant Joseph Stones, executed on January 13, 1917 for 'shamefully casting away his rifle' should have his name added to the town's war memorial.

And while we are on the subject of crime during the war, I asked Karel to go back to Rüsselsheim (issue 57) and see what had happened since I included Captain Damon's follow-up on page 40 of issue 66. 'I was very surprised to find a memorial painting on Taunusstrasse', reported Karel, 'down which the American flyers marched to their deaths. The memorial is a private initiative of a young local artist, Uwe Wenzel. The painting is a fragment of a larger canvas which another artist, Hans Diebschlag, had been commissioned to do by the city council for the town hall in 1992. Titled "Wir lieben das Marschieren" (We love to march), it was controversial because it linked the local carnival with German militarism, so the new Frau Oberbürgermeisterin had it removed in 1995. As a protest, Wenzel painted an enlarged copy of this particular fragment, adding the pregnant date 'August 26, 1944', and hung it against the facade of the parking garage on Taunusstrasse. Again, there was much publicity and debate, but this time there was no talk of having the work removed.'

Karel: 'I also went to Wunsiedel to see what has happened to the grave of Hess (issue 58). I must say that I felt pretty conspicuous taking the photos. The headstone has been altered since 1987 (compare with the picture on page 24 of that edition). The inscription now reads "Ich hab's gewagt" which roughly translates as "I ventured" or "I made an attempt".'





The Bormann skull mix-up. *Left:* **This is the one presented to the press as his but it turned out that the photographers just pictured the more photogenic of the two skulls which were recovered in December 1972 beside the Invalidenstrasse. The correct head is pictured on the right and I am grateful to Jay M. Glass for bringing the error to my attention.**

For as long as I have been editing the magazine, controversy surrounding the fate of Martin Bormann has rumbled on. I opened a file on Hitler's deputy in 1973, the year following the discovery of remains alleged to be those of Bormann and Hitler's doctor, Dr Ludwig Stumpfegger, but, in view of the speculation that he had escaped from Berlin and was living in South America (see *Martin Bormann — Nazi in Exile,* 1981, by Paul Manning), or that he was captured by the Soviets as has been claimed by J. O. E. O. Mahrke (see the *South African Military History Journal,* December 1992), I held the Bormann story in abeyance. However, when I began work on *Berlin Then and Now* with Tony Le Tissier in 1990, I could no longer avoid the issue but felt quite safe in concluding that the human remains discovered off the Invalidenstrasse in December 1972, as confirmed by examination by the renowned American forensic odontologist, Dr Reidar F. Sognnaes, in 1973-74 were indeed those of Bormann. But I slipped up on one important point and it was Jay M. Glass, the Chief Deputy Coroner of Jefferson County, Alabama, who brought my attention to a lengthy article by Dr Sognnaes in the US *Journal of Forensic Sciences.* This made fascinating reading as he also looked into the Russian autopsy evidence concerning Hitler and Eva Braun (issue 61 published in 1988) as it was not until after the fall of the German Democratic Republic that we could visit and photograph the room at Buch hospital where the Hitler autopsy had taken place (issue 77).

Anyway, to get back to Bormann, I included on page 267 of *Berlin Then and Now* the oft-used composite picture of the skull with a portrait of Bormann released at the time by Associated Press without realising that it showed the wrong head! I will let Dr Sognnaes explain: 'Ending a long story, the "Bormann skull", which a few years ago was so prominently displayed in the world press was none other than Bormann's post-mortem companion, Dr Ludwig Stumpfegger. The post-mortem photographic mixup of the two skulls may have been purely accidental. Perhaps the Stumpfegger skull was simply chosen as the better looking one by competing photographers, whereas what later turned out to be the real Bormann skull at first appeared like a toothless blob of dirt. Even as the dental evidence emerged regarding the facts of the post-mortem data, there has to my knowledge never been any public correction of the photographic error. Meanwhile, this unnecessary confusion became a stroke of good luck for those who for various reasons preferred to keep the Bormann mystery alive.'

In August 1997, I received a fascinating letter from the States giving yet another follow-up to issue 61 and the last days in Berlin. 'Decorated for bravery at 16', wrote Armin D. Lehmann from Waldport, Oregon, 'I was one of the boys received by Hitler at his last birthday, April 20, 1945 and became one of his last couriers — perhaps the last. I am retired now, after a successful career in travel and tourism and in the process of writing my memoirs. In my research, I came across your publication. Your name-list triggered many recollections.' [The list of Dramatis Personae was compiled by Andrew Mollo, our Third Reich expert, who cut his teeth on the making of *It Happened Here* (issue 12) back in the 1950s, and more recently worked in Russia on the TV series *Sharpe's Rifles.*] 'By the way, on page 30 of the same issue, the lay-out drawing of the bunker shows No. 7 as a cloak room. I believe it was part of the "Hundebunker" (dog shelter), as was the room next to it (without a number) and, if I remember correctly, from there a second emergency exit existed. The ventilation towers were used as watchtowers as well, at least during the last days. We couriers called the Vorbunker "oberer Bunker" (upper bunker) and the Führerbunker "unterer Bunker" (lower bunker).'

Armin: 'I am enclosing photos showing the front and rear of Wilhelmstrasse 64 (now Wilhelmstr. 54) and one of the cellar window shafts of Reichsjugendführer (RJF) Artur Axmann's command post in the then air raid shelter of the Parteikanzlei. I took these photos on a recent trip back to the city. There is little to report about my subsequent escape from Berlin. RJF Axmann's Group 5 moved up to third in the break-out formation order for leaving the Reichskanzlei. Ours was the only group that did not advance underground. Fire started before we reached the Weidendammer Brücke and RJF Axmann sent me back with orders to bring forward those trailing behind. A Tiger tank exploded, a barrage of artillery shell-fire followed but I have no memory of what happened to me. I don't even know how many days I was unconscious. I woke up with head-wounds, gashes and bruises all over and paralysed from the waist down. A female Russian officer who must have been a physician and thought that I was paralysed for life (I snapped out of it two weeks later) issued discharge papers to relatives in the Russian occupation zone. In July 1945, I took the first opportunity to escape to the American occupation zone where my mother and siblings, refugees from Silesia, had found shelter in quarters of ex-PoWs. I almost didn't make it, because the paralysis returned while swimming across the Mulde river to freedom. A stranger saved me from drowning.'

'The British historical magazine *After the Battle* published a compilation of 46 names of Zeitzeugen (contemporary witnesses), signified as "Dramatis Personae", who occupied in April of 1945, together with Hitler, the so-called Führerbunker', writes Armin D. Lehmann of Waldport, Oregon, in the introduction to his historical paper *People in the Bunker — My Recollections.*

'On April 20, 1945, Hitler celebrated his birthday with a reception in the Chancellery garden. Hitler youth recipients of the Iron Cross, including myself, were brought there to be personally introduced. At the supper afterward, I was informed that I would stay with Axmann to be his Melder (courier).

For more than 100 hours, I ran messages in and out of Hitler's last headquarters, mostly from Axmann who was located in the cellar of the Parteikanzlei (Party Chancellery) at Wilhelmstrasse 64 (the building was still in existence when I visited the historical site in May 1997). I also went to the Reich Chancellery Notlazarett (emergency medical clinic) and secured medical supplies for the hospital ward and first aid station located in the Parteikanzlei. Wilhelmstrasse was under constant fire from the Russians and, at any moment, they were expected to break through and capture the bunkers where Hitler and the "Dramatis Personae" were located.

'Reichsjugendführer (Reich Youth Leader) Artur Axmann was the leader of the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth) and, at the end of the war, commander of the Hitler Youth Home Defence Force (Panzernahkampfbrigade Artur Axmann), a close-combat tank destruction brigade named after him. He was my commandant whom I served as courier from April 21 to May 2, 1945.

'I felt honoured that I had been selected by Axmann to remain at his side as his Melder. I admired his sharp mind and his many interests (history, literature, music, etc.) but most of all his integrity and fortitude. He had been a soldier earlier in the war and lost one arm.

'Axmann was very proud of his Jungen (boys) and he went out of his way to evidence how proud he was of us. I have one distinct memory when we were both in the Führerbunker. He recognised a former HJ-Obergebietsführer, Erich Baerenfaenger, who had become one of the war's great heroes. I believe he was the youngest of Hitler's generals and was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves.

'Axmann and Baerenfaenger were on a first name basis. "Erich, I want to introduce my courier Lehmann, received by the Führer on his birthday." General Baerenfaenger shook my hand and I was stunned; astounded that two such heroic personalities would pat me on the back. And that's what Baerenfaenger did — pat me on the back!

'Axmann learned of Himmler's negotiations with Count Bernadotte and Himmler's disloyalty seemed to have a devastating effect on him. "How disappointed the Führer must feel. What a blow!" Axmann expressed sorrow and, at that time, probably became even more determined to show Hitler that he and members of the Hitler Youth would remain loyal to the bitter end.

'After the war, I visited him and we had long conversations. He made admissions: "Fehler wurden gemacht" ("Mistakes were made") but he never said anything bad about Hitler. That an intelligent man of his calibre could remain loyal to Hitler and his aims was beyond me, after all the revelations on hand. He remained for me an unsolved mystery. He prided himself on remaining loyal — but loyalty must have its ethics, too.'

'My wife took this photo of me in May this year (1997) with Professor Dr E. G. Schenck, the sole surviving physician who treated the wounded in the Reichskanzlei, the third person being a friend of his, Dr Hans Schüftze.'

The 'time warp' in Tubney Wood (issue 62) has now moved on apace, in spite of strenuous efforts by Nigel Dawe to have something preserved. The Consul shelter was rescued by Nigel in February 1991 . . . but all the rest has now gone.

I am indebted to so many readers for tip-offs on relics still remaining to be seen that it has been an embarrassment not to have been able to follow all of them up. I recall back in 1988 Jim Bergin of Addington, Surrey, insisting that I meet him at a rendezvous on the A4 so that he could take me to the location of a secret wartime factory. He wouldn't tell me where it was so I followed him on a long mystery tour which ended up in a country lane near Oxford. You read about it in issue 62. Nigel Dawe of Abingdon, Oxon, subsequently attempted to get at least part of the Tubney Wood site preserved but he later phoned to tell me that all had now been demolished.

In January 1996, our Colditz expert, David Ray of Rugby, Warwickshire, wrote with additional information on issue 63: 'On page 41, the bottom right photograph, shows most of the Oflag IVC airmen. I have now managed to find the two missing names to the group. Kneeling, on the left, is W/O Peter Uruba and standing on the extreme right is F/Lt. Emil Busina, navigator in F/Lt Frank Cigos's crew in a Wellington of No. 311 Czech Squadron. Uruba was 2nd pilot. Busina died in 1968 but Uruba is 80 years old and living in Prague. The photograph was taken in the PoW courtyard looking north-west with the chapel door on the right behind the group.'

Then, in May 1997, David Dunn wrote from Wakefield: 'I have now visited Colditz four times and it was with the assistance of your publication that on my second visit (May '92) I thought I had at last found the "Dutch" well in the park. The photograph on page 19 shows the location to be near the stream and by following the stream it was easy to trace. I enclose a copy of the photograph I took at the time. What I could not understand was it appeared to be too near the stream and in fact would have been outside the fenced enclosure.

I had originally been shown the Tubney Wood site by Jim Bergin, an avid Second World War enthusiast. This was another of Jim's discoveries back in 1977 on Dengemarsh Shingle, near Dungeness.

'My most recent visit (this Easter) was with a fellow member of the Colditz Society, David Windle. We found the park to be the clearest that it has ever been as many of the smaller trees had been felled. During our time in the park we found, firstly, a metal locking bar sticking up and, after clearing away the leaves and thin layers of earth, uncovered what must be the original well used by the Dutch. I enclose a copy of the photograph clearly showing the locking bar and large nut and bolt fastener which was cleverly duplicated in glass by the Dutch escape team. The entrance to the shaft is also flush with the ground — another point mentioned in many of the books.'

Marvellous detection work at Colditz by David Dunn and David Windle. *Left:* **The Dutch well in the park as it was during the war.** *Right:* **As found in April 1997, still complete with locking bar. Really well done!**

Left: ***Lulubelle,*** **an M3 General Lee tank, rumbles through a heavy sandstorm in Columbia's 1943 production** ***Sahara.*** *Right:* **Over 50 years later, Francis Blake of Fullerton, California, set out to trace the location where the film had been made. Matching up landscapes is very time-consuming and it took Francis several days to find the tell-tale notch in the hills just faintly visible above the rear of the tank.**

Much more difficult, yet Francis's dedication to his hobby paid off. He realises now that the film company unit must have imported sand as this part of the badlands is barren desert. Incredible stuff . . . ten out of ten!

I like to include features on the making of war films but until Steven Spielberg decided to re-create D-Day in *Saving Private Ryan,* Hollywood had more or less forsaken the Second World War for many years. Nevertheless, living in California, perhaps it is only natural that Francis Blake has developed a keen interest in the subject and chasing the locations used for old war movies has become one of his hobbies.

It began in 1963 when he accidently discovered the battlefield location site for *Desert Rats* (1953) starring Richard Burton but *Sahara,* made ten years earlier featuring Humphrey Bogart and an M3 General Lee tank named *Lulubelle,* is his real favourite. The California desert is a frequent movie location, having also been used for filming *Five Graves to Cairo, Desert Fox,* and *Wake Island* but Francis's interest in *Sahara* was sparked by contact with a veteran of the 84th Reconnaissance Battalion of the 4th Armored Division which supported the film production in 1943. He said that the filming had taken place (incorrectly as it turned out) near the northern shore of the Salton Sea close to a Navy seaplane base as he remembered seaplanes flying overhead and landing nearby. It was also near US Route 99 (now State 86) as the filming had to stop when the microphones picked up engine noises from the highway.

Anyway, early in 1996, Francis carried out a foray into the San Felipe Hills — a 15-square mile area of barren desert known locally as the 'badlands' — armed with a set of stills from Columbia Pictures. There were two prominent features to look for: a ridge with a distinctive V-notch and an oasis 'mosque'. After many days hiking the area, the oasis site was discovered just 1,000 yards from the main road but all that remained of the mosque was a jumble of adobe bricks. Fragments of Los Angeles newspapers from March 1943 helped to confirm the location as well as numerous blank cartridge cases in .30-06, .303 British, and .45 calibre, all dated 1941 or 1942. With the absence of any Sahara-type sand dunes in that part of the desert, Francis then realised that sand (since blown away) must have been imported and 'moulded' by wind machines.

After exploring the area, and finding much more debris left behind by the film company, Francis then took several 'then and now' comparisons.

Finding the mosque was essential although it turned out to be a disappointment as all that was left 50-odd years later was a pile of adobe bricks.

Bomb disposal the 'English Patient' way. Arthur Hogben was technical advisor for those scenes in the film depicting bombs, explosives and mines and his pictures show the tense moment when Naveen Andrews defuzes the bomb beneath the bridge as the ground shakes from the approaching tanks. *Left:* **A prop man fits the fuze for Naveen to remove** *(right).*

A more recent block-buster with a war theme was *The English Patient* but it was only after I had seen the film that I was told that Major Arthur Hogben (who has advised me on bomb disposal matters for many years) had been one of the technical advisors. I must have overlooked his name in the long credits because when I queried this with Arthur he joked that 'you would have had a long wait to see my name on the credit list as it was about two-thirds of the way through, by which time most people have left the cinema!

'I was involved in scenes containing bombs, explosions or mines, although a number of shots which took days to film were either cut out entirely or reduced to a few seconds screen time. However, it was fun being involved both with the actors and the technicians.

'Yes, the wire cutting of the fuze of the bomb in the pit was authentic', explained Arthur in answer to my query. 'In the original book by Michael Ondaatje, it was much more clearly described and the reasons given, but the film takes a lot of short cuts. Anthony Minghella, the director, told me right at the beginning: "We will always accept your advice but reserve the right to ignore it for the sake of dramatic effect". Hence the short cuts and the fuze being twice as large as in real life.

'The German bomb in question was fitted with a No. 17 clockwork delay fuze and a "Y" anti-disturbance fuze to protect it. The 17 fuze was conveniently ignored and it must be assumed that it would be dealt with after the more dangerous "Y" fuze had been rendered safe. The "Y" fuze is a battery-operated fuze fitted with three mercury tilt switches, one in each plane such that any movement of the bomb would cause the fuze to function, thus preventing the rendering safe of the long-delay fuze. The technique used was to pour liquid oxygen into a clay moulded cup mounted such that the oxygen rested on the fuze head and so froze the battery making it temporarily inactive. Once inactive the fuze was removed and destroyed. In this case, having frozen the fuze, he (Kip), in trying to remove the fuze, broke the top of it off and could not therefore remove its active part. He was therefore forced, while the battery was still frozen, to find the battery circuit and cut it thus preventing the functioning of the tilt switches should the bomb move after the battery had thawed out. (Hence his worry when the tanks were crossing the bridge.) This action is based upon an actual event carried out by a Major Martin, RE, in London in early 1943.'

While on the subject of bomb disposal, when I spoke with Arthur some years ago when preparing the article in issue 68, he was then in charge of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technical Information Centre at Chattenden, Kent. We spoke about the Unexploded Bomb Register which was prepared for every borough council after the war to give them information on UXBs in their area which, for a variety of reasons, were unrecoverable. Arthur explained that while this was not restricted information, it was a sensitive subject and it would only worry people unduly if I published the fact that there were still 100 or so known unexploded bombs beneath London. I say 'known', because there are undoubtedly far more unrecorded bombs which have yet to come to light. In any case, the electrical fuzes will all have safely discharged themselves long ago and it is more prudent to let sleeping dogs lie. I therefore refrained from giving precise details, choosing instead to illustrate a bomb left in open countryside when issue 68 was published in May 1990 (page 46).

However, when *The Daily Telegraph* discovered rather belatedly in 1996 that UXBs had been abandoned, they could not resist 'revealing' the existence of the abandoned bombs register which, in turn, led to the ludicrous situation of the Government being pressured into acknowledging that there were still unrecovered unexploded bombs in 42 areas of the Capital. This led the MP for Southwark and Bermondsey, Simon Hughes, to demand details whereupon the Armed Forces Minister 'released' information about something that had already been in the possession of every local authority for many years! However, most councils claimed complete ignorance and I received a call from the London Borough of Newham (in whose district our office falls) to ask if we could help them locate the UXBs in West and East Ham (of which there are at least two dozen).

UNEXPLODED BOMBS!

Revealed: The 100 UXBs that are still under the streets of London. . .and why no one is planning to dig them up

Bomb lies buried beneath hospital

Bomb in the garden? We're not bothered

There's an explosive

in the back garden

In our latest book, *The East End Then and Now,* Arthur kindly supplied text for a chapter on bomb disposal in the East End, including one incident in which he was personally involved. In March 1997, I asked him if he had any records on the number of George Crosses and George Medals awarded to bomb disposal personnel, and he quickly came up with comprehensive figures: Royal Engineers 13 GCs and 114 GMs; Royal Navy 22GCs and 127GMs; RAF 7 GCs and 14 GMs.

Coincidentally, the following month, Chief Petty Officer Reg Ellingworth's George Cross, sold by his wife 30 years previously for £720, was tracked down by his son Donald to a collector in Canada who agreed to sell it back to the family for £8,500. Donald's father was killed defuzing a magnetic mine in 1940 (see *The Blitz Then and Now,* Volume 2, page 188). 'The search was not easy', said Donald Ellingworth, 'but I was determined I wasn't going to give up. The medals belong to the family but I am presenting them to the Imperial War Museum where they will go on display.'

The Channel Islands have an enviable reputation for the preservation of their wartime history, thanks to the dedication of members of the Occupation Society. In 1981, they recovered the arms of the range-finder from the Noirmont command bunker which had been thrown over the cliff by the British Army in 1945. Vandals soon returned them to the bottom where they remained until September 1996 when the Army Air Corps came to the rescue.

This time, the arms were flown to the Society's storage bunker, well away from the cliff edge to be treated against rust by a team under Martyn Garnier, seen here *(above left)* **on top of the concrete plug which sealed the base of the range-finder.** *Above right:* **July 1997: The assembled turret is transported to Noirmont Point and placed in position** *(right)***, on the prepared mounting.**

Preservation projects continue apace in the Channel Islands and we have reported several times on the recovery of artillery by my old school buddy, Terry O'Brien (issues 72, 73 and 80). Now the range-finder which once adorned the command bunker at Noirmont Point has been successfully lifted from the foot of the cliffs — for the second time! It had already been winched to the top by Peter Le Conte in August 1980 but the 6-metre-long arm had been rolled back over the edge by vandals. However, in September 1996, the Army Air Corps came to the rescue and raised the range-finder with a Lynx.

Lovely then and now taken 53 years apart. *Left:* **Under construction, May 1944;** *right* **under preservation, July 1997.**

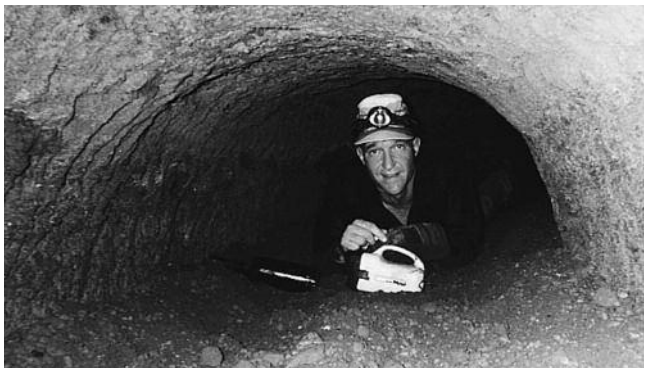
Return to Iwo Jima. Eddie Daniel: 'This is a major gun emplacement situated in the 362-A complex. When I first saw this gun (January 1995) it was buried under the roof of the bunker which appeared to have been blown down on it during the war. At that time, all you could see was the breech and some of the other mechanisms, the rest was buried under tons of concrete and earth. When I went back to explore the cave under the adjacent bunker (there are two bunkers only 15-20 yards apart) in August, I found the bunker had been excavated and the roof and soil in the bunker had been pushed over the edge of the cliff which these two bunkers had been placed on.'

'This is the bunker right next to the gun. It also has a mount for a gun, but the weapon is no longer there. The photo shows the back of the bunker with a door entrance. The white line you see is my rope going down into the cave right under the bunker. The cave is extremely hot with sulphur fumes; you can only stand being down there for about 10 minutes and then you have to get out fast. The first time I went in to explore, I found wooden cases of grenades still packed. This time, I found the cases had been emptied, probably by the Japanese government. I really want to explore this cave more, but it is just too damn hot!'

Commander Eddie Daniel, serving on the USS *Independence,* has visited Iwo Jima (issue 82) several times, sending me a vast pile of photographs of his explorations. We would need a complete issue to reproduce them all so regrettably this has to be just a representative sample. (See also issue 92, page 46.) As an aside, Eddie said in one letter that he had 'just finished Exercise "Rimpac '96" — a multi-national naval and air exercise held every two years — on which a Japanese destroyer shot down one of our A-6 Intruders when it was towing a target for them, a *very* stupid mistake since the target was 2-3 miles behind the aircraft! The A-6 was almost directly over the destroyer. Most of us don't want to play with the Japanese Navy again unless we can shoot back! Incidentally, rather appropriately, the shoot down occurred on the anniversary of the Midway battle.'

'This is the Betty Bomber Bunker (at least that's what we call it), as you photographed it for page 3 of issue 82. The airframe has now separated from the concrete and you can see the Japanese "meatball" clearly on the fuselage.'

'On Hill 357, I turned over this old piece of aluminium from what looked like aircraft wreckage and, to my surprise, I didn't find a "meatball" but the star and bar from an old American aircraft. I have no idea of what type though.'



Left: **'Exploring the caves is tiresome', explained Eddie, 'as sometimes you have to crawl before it opens up to almost erect height. This is myself in the same cave at the base of Suribachi. As you can tell, I come prepared with a headlamp, large flashlight, extra batteries, backpack to put relics in, and water. The bottle is a Japanese Army beer bottle, with a**

Japanese Army star emblem on the bottom. The interiors are very hot, and by hot I mean 110-120 degrees.' *Right:* **'Same cave, note yellow explosives, small-arms ammo, top-loading magazine for a Jap machine gun at bottom of photo. That magazine was still loaded with rounds and is now in my storage in Arkansas.'**

Don Marshall of Astoria, Oregon, *has* to be one of the most colourful characters I have ever had the pleasure to work with. He has a beautifully descriptive way of writing; is intensely proud of being a Marine, and I was very pleased to include his personal account in issue 82. I knew Don had gone on after the war to join the Los Angeles Police Department and the following anecdote is typical:

'Hollywood Boulevard was my first beat. It was great, but I still wanted more excitement. I transferred to San Pedro and walked the tough waterfront, Beacon Street. The Korean war began and I volunteered for the Army, I asked for tanks citing my WWII experiences. Much to my disgust, I was assigned MP duty at Camp Roberts, Paso Robles, California. The war passed me by and when it ended, I returned to the police dept.

'I was assigned to downtown Central division, again walking a beat — a very satisfying job. Lieutenant Sam Posner called me into the office one day. The lieutenant and a police inspector invited me to have a seat. "Marshall", he began, "We know you were a Marine in the Pacific, and we know what you went through. How do you feel about the Japanese today?"

'I told him I didn't feel one way or the other. The war was eight years behind. I did my job and they did theirs, thinking back to a scorching letter my Dad had written.

"Fine. We have a problem. The Japanese are beginning to open small businesses along 1st Street. They asked for a beat officer, one they could rely on. If you have no objections, we would like to give the beat to you."

'I began the following day, fresh uniform, cleaned and oiled pistol, handcuffs and polished baton. I was ready for anything. I marched to each of the Japanese stores and introduced myself. I went to the Buddhist temple and informed the priest I would be receptive to any suggestions he may have. I was warmly received along the entire beat.

'A week went by with no incident. What can they be up to?

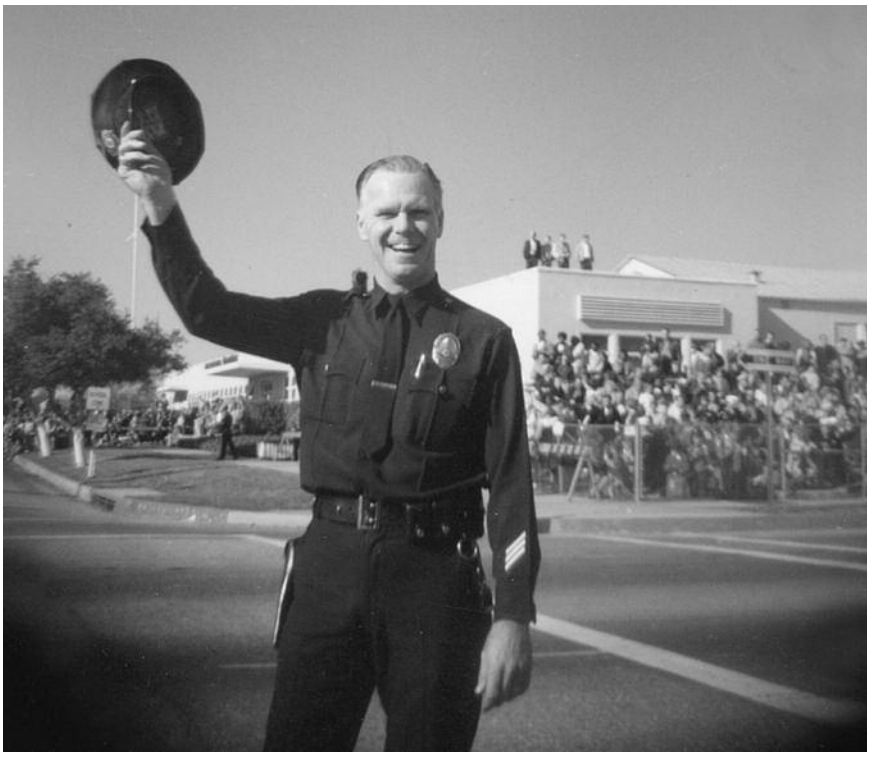
'Then, one day a small Japanese gentleman emerged from the *Ginza*, a basement restaurant on 1st Street.

"My name Jimmu, I own tis prace. You Mr Marshaw?"

"I am."

"Aaah, you Maline in Pacific?"

"I was."



'Our' Iwo Jima Marine in his post-war rôle with the Los Angeles Police Department. 'Strangely enough', wrote Don Marshall, 'this is the only photo I have of myself while a member of the LAPD. I think the others must have gone with my dear departed second wife . . . she didn't die, she just departed . . . along with a new convertible, the bank account . . . and my attorney!'

"Aaah, you big man. You fight Japanese sodjer?"

'Aha! Now it comes, a cloud of suspicion boiled up in my mind. Uh huh, I knew it . . . I knew it! Now I am going to find out what this little bastard and all the others are planning. They are just too damned nice.

"You shoot Japanese sodjer?"

"Yes, I did", I snapped, glaring, at the same time preparing myself for any sudden move by him.

"You get wounded?"

"No", I lied. He wasn't going to have the satisfaction.

"Ooooh, you big man", he spread his arms, "Big target, you no get wounded. Hah, I write retter to Emperor and tell him Japanese sodjer berry bad shot!"

'I stood looking at this little Japanese man Jimmu. All the suspicions I had built up suddenly vanished.

'The humor of the situation struck me. I began to laugh, at first it was more of a giggle. Jimmu's face was totally innocent of any expression. The more I looked at him, the harder I laughed. We locked arms and went below for a glass of Saki. I felt I was now a Marine.'

Prolific relic hunters nearer to home are Colin and Ian Dewey of Peterborough. They have explored many battlefields in France and Belgium and all these items were found near Caen — they do not want to reveal the precise location for obvious reasons.

Colin has never forgiven me for my rather flippant remark in issue 84, page 53 that 'Normandy . . . has been done to death'. The words were not well chosen to explain the point I wanted to make and I regret having used them.

It was my original intention to include a regular museum feature in *After the Battle* but I ran into two problems. First, museums began multiplying faster than I could ever have covered them, and then those collections which were owned privately tended to have a short lifespan. Because we keep all issues in print, this led to complaints from readers visiting a particular place only to find the museum long gone or exhibits moved. The Lyndhurst collection in No. 1, Pattern Room in No. 2, Brenzett in No. 4, Ostend in No. 5, Roudeix in No. 8, have all disappeared, moved or been dispersed, and the demise of the Rosseel Collection was such a problem I had to drop the page in subsequent reprints of issue 5.

The events surrounding the sinking of HMS *Dasher* were told by John Hall in issue 83. Now, John and Noreen Steele have written the full story in *They Were Never Told - the Tragedy of HMS Dasher* published by Argyll Publishing, Glendarvel, Argyll, PA22 3AE.

Over the past 25 years, there have been many times when the answer to a particular problem has seemed almost insuperable, the location of Eisenhower's pre-D-Day command post at Portsmouth (issue 84) being just one example. However, being nurtured on the exploits of Biggles, I have always held to one of his sayings which is equally relevant in everyday life as in Captain Johns' adventure books: 'There's always a way — you've just got to find it'.

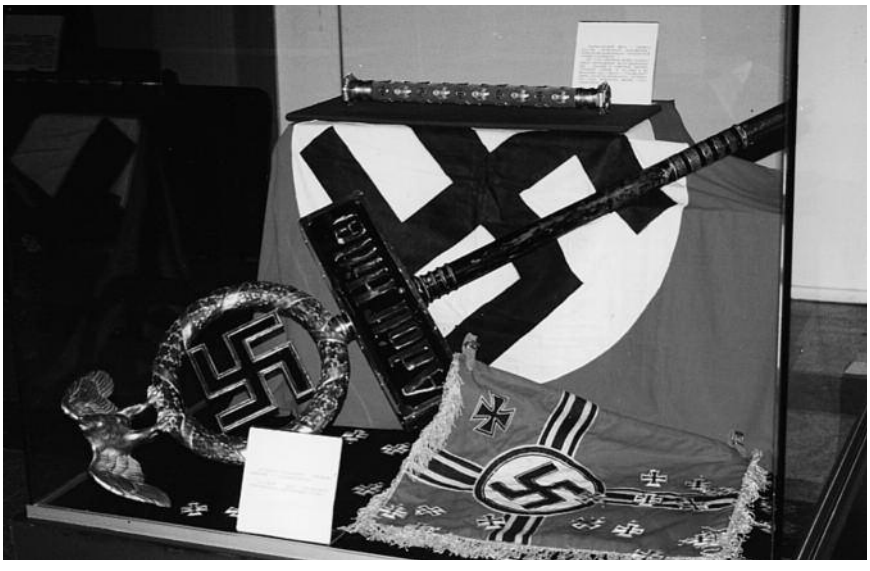
In the early issues, I just used to go to each chosen location and carry out on-the-spot research, but later I realised that it was more efficient to spend as much time as possible researching each photograph before the trip. Jean Paul blazed the trail with *Blitzkrieg in the West Then and Now* where he had dozens of uncaptioned German pictures to match up. He spent hours sending photocopies of pictures to the mayors of dozens of towns to see if they recognised the view, and making numerous telephone calls to remote village post offices. Jean Paul still feels, though, that his best discovery was the section of road at Poteau which featured in the German cine film taken in the Ardennes in December 1944 which he included in *The Battle of the Bulge Then and Now*) (pages 209-224), particularly the picture on page 219 with the same silver birch tree beside the road. Sadly it was cut down shortly after the book was published.

Nevertheless, at the risk of leading more readers on wild goose chases, I am including some interesting displays on these two pages. This is the Arado 196 seaplane which belonged to Bordfliegerstaffel 1.196 aboard the *Prinz Eugen*. It was removed before the ship was used in the Bikini atom bomb test (see issue 28) and was spotted by Jurgen Meyer-Brenkhof at the Naval Air Station at Willow Grove, Philadelphia.

In November 1996, Tim Bryan, of the Great Western Railway Museum in Swindon, wrote to say that he had uncovered more information on Eisenhower's train (issue 84).

'The discovery of a diary kept by one of the stewards on the train, Frank Brookman, led me to investigate further', explained Tim. 'The Prime Minister visited the train on a number of occasions and the autograph book kept by Frank contains Churchill's signature on many of his visits. The first meeting with Eisenhower recorded in the diary was on the 23rd March 1944 at Tidworth (see page 29) although it seems likely that the two had met on the train a number of times before this date.

'On 12th May, Churchill was again a guest, this time chairing a meeting of the Dominion Prime Ministers at Ascot (see *D-Day Then and Now,* Volume 1, page 156). In the months leading up to D-Day, the locations visited by the train tended to be those in the south of England, and it is not surprising that the train did not see much activity from the 2nd to the 8th of June when Eisenhower's attention was concentrated more heavily on events unfolding on the beaches of northern France.'



'Last year I visited the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Moscow', wrote Mr D. J. McDonald of Christchurch, New Zealand, in May 1997. Some of the exhibits were previously displayed at the Central War Museum such as the Adolf Hitler banner (issue 50). The baton in the display case was inscribed "Rommel — June 1942" although the caption was in Russian.'

Early in 1980, when I was putting together *The Battle of Britain Then and Now*, I called at Blake Hall, a stately mansion near Ongar in Essex, the home of the Capel-Cure family. The property had been requisitioned by the government in 1940 and had been occupied first by the Royal Army Medical Corps before being taken over by the Air Ministry after the operations block on North Weald aerodrome was bombed. When I knocked on the front door I had no idea if anything remained to be seen of the ops room so I could not believe my eyes when Major Nigel Capel-Cure unlocked a door leading from the hallway. There, in all its majesty (although that is not the right word to describe the delapidated room stretching through three floors right up to the roof), lay the former nerve centre for Sector E, complete with tiered balconies and 'Tote' boards (see pages 170-171). To me it was the discovery of the century but to Major Capel-Cure it was not only an eyesore but a real sore point in that the Air Ministry had never provided enough money in compensation to restore the wing when the RAF reluctantly handed the hall back to the family in 1948. When in 1982 the major's son, Ronnie, took over the house with plans to open the grounds to the public, he approached me with the idea of opening up the room as an additional attraction. Wilf Nicoll, who then had long-since retired from the police force and had worked with me on researching and putting together the Battle of Britain book, was dead keen to restore it as it would have looked in 1940, and Wilf was working on a script for a recording to be broadcast on the Tannoy when he died suddenly in May 1982. I did not have the stomach to carry the project on and suggested that Ronnie might try contacting a local enthusiast Derek Aspinall. Derek and his brother Ron have now built up a marvellous display at Blake Hall — always the best kind of museum when it is located in a historic setting in its own right.

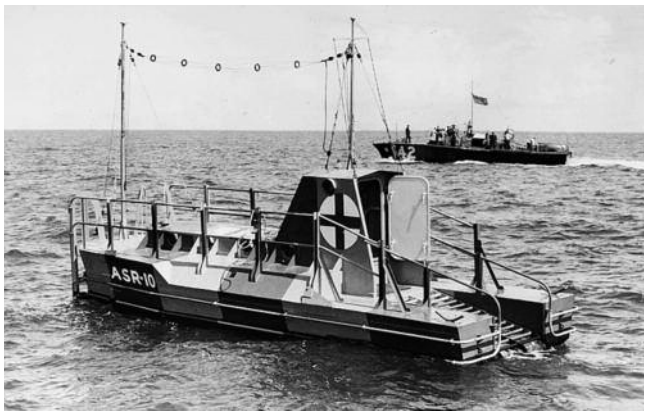
Back in the early days of *After the Battle*, it had been my intention to run a regular piece on war museums but these multiplied at such a rate that a quarterly slot could never have done justice. Even Bart Vanderveen has a job keeping pace with just military vehicle collections in *Wheels & Tracks*. Museums are of course on two distinct levels: the professional fully-funded museums — the Imperial War Museum, particularly, goes from strength to strength — and the enthusiast operations which rely on volunteers. An example of the latter is the Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre set up in the Royal Gunpowder Magazine No. 5 at Purfleet on the Thames in Essex.

I cannot say that I like the latest ideological trend of calling 'war' museums anachronistically 'peace' museums (like that at Caen in Normandy), or fudging the parameters like Wizernes (issue 97), or the politicalisation of exhibits like the *Enola Gay* fracas at the Smithsonian (issue 92, page 47).

How refreshing, therefore, to find no such controversy surrounding the magnificent new American Air Museum at Duxford — not only housed in the largest pre-cast concrete structure in Europe but also displaying the finest collection of American combat aircraft outside the United States. Sadly, James Stewart (issue 1), one of the project's staunch fund-raisers, never lived to see the dream fulfilled, but Charlton Heston was present to pay tribute to his fellow actor who died in July 1997.

Heston was a sergeant with the 77th Bomb Squadron serving in Alaska and could have been a subject for our early 'Personality' feature which covered the wartime careers of people *not* famous for their war exploits. I think I have explained before that the idea ran out of steam following a number of refusals by the individuals concerned who wanted to retain their war stories for their own biographies. Although Charlton Heston was not one of them, his absorbing *In the Arena* was published in 1995 crammed with anecdotes about his acting career.

An Eleventh Air Force vet meets two from the Eighth. Charlton Heston with Reginald and Lawrence George at the American Air Museum opened at Duxford in August 1997.



Then . . . and now. A black and white reproduction really does not do justice to the bright yellow and red livery of this preserved air-sea rescue float pictured for us by John Hall of Kilmarnock.

John Hall of Stewarton, Kilmarnock, was kind enough to tell me about a unique 'relic' restored and preserved at the Scottish Maritime Museum at Irvine on the west coast of Scotland — the sole remaining air-sea rescue float from World War II. John wrote that '*ASR-10* was one of 16 floats built by Carrier Engineering of Wembley in 1941. Their function was to be moored in the English Channel and North Sea where it was hoped ditched crew from RAF aircraft would be able to reach them until picked-up by an air-sea rescue launch. The floats, given the codename "Cuckoo", contained a radio transmitter, first-aid kit, food, bunks and heaters to enable a downed pilot to be as comfortable as possible while awaiting rescue. The concept was a good one but the reality was that there was an insufficient number to cover the bomber routes into Europe and it appears that "Cuckoos" in fact only saved two airmen — a German and a Canadian.

'After the war *ASR-10* was used by the Navy for gunnery practice in the Clyde area before eventually lying derelict near Greenock for many years until being rescued by the Scottish Maritime Museum in 1983.'

Ross Bastiaan continues with his extraordinary labour of love of erecting commemorative plaques (issue 85) because, as he says: 'I feel that Australia has sold itself short; we are only a little country but we gave so much in France and Belgium. My most-important plaque is at the Menin Gate; the most-read possibly the one at the Bridge on the River Kwai, and the remotest that on the Kokoda Trail. The latest on the Gulf War brings the total up to 95 — just Borneo, Korea and Vietnam remain. Then the journey is done. I am planning a book for 1998.'

Having written about death and destruction for a quarter of a century, one inevitably gets hardened to the millions of tragedies which wars create, yet one of the most poignant moments for me came in 1994 when I was researching the death of Admiral Ramsay, the Allied Naval Commander, killed taking off from a Paris aerodrome in January 1945 (issue 87). Jock Gardner, our author for that story who works at the Naval Historical Branch, discovered that a newsreel team had fortuitously been covering the departure of the Admiral at Toussus-le-Noble and he tracked down a print at the Imperial War Museum. I quickly made arrangements to view it on a Steinbeck editing machine which allows one to stop and start the film and select individual frames.

Knowing the fate about to befall him, it was eerie watching the Admiral don his flying jacket and board the aircraft. As the door closed behind him, and the aircraft taxied out to take off, one knew that the Admiral and his passengers had but minutes to live. The next scenes showed the burning aircraft yet by the simple reversing of the control on the editing machine, we could bring Ramsey back to life. It was almost as if one was playing God: moving the lever one way he died; reverse it and he sprang back to life!

Workaholic Ross Bastiaan. I was very pleased to learn in August 1997 that his work has finally been recognised in Australia by his appointment to the Council of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. 'This has given me a great deal of pride', Ross told me, 'as it is an opportunity for a younger person to contribute to the preservation and maintenance of the history of our country in war'.

Charlie Kenny of Ilford, Essex, is a fan of Al Bowlly and he called me to task for an error in Volume 2 of *The Blitz Then and Now* in my piece on the wartime dance crooner's death in a raid on London on the night of April 16/17, 1941. I had obtained a copy of Al Bowlly's death certificate to confirm the place where he was killed and it stated Duke Street so I linked his death with a picture showing the Duke Street (which turns off Oxford Street) taken the morning after the raid. However, Mr Kenny informed me that Bowlly's flat was actually in another Duke Street in the West End: the one in SW1 not W1! He kindly sent me photographs explaining that the flat was No. 58 in Dukes Court near the corner with Jermyn Street.

'You state quite correctly that Al Bowlly was killed in his flat in Duke Street', pointed out Charles Kenny of Ilford, Essex. 'Alas the photo you show on page 540 of *The Blitz,* Volume 2, is of Duke Street, W1, whereas he was living in Dukes Court near the junction of Duke Street and Jermyn Street.' Chas also discovered that the famous pre-war crooner was buried in a communal grave in the City of Westminster Cemetery in Uxbridge Road, Hanwell, in West London, Al's only memorial now being his name on the memorial stone.

I am always mortified to find that I have made an error as I try very hard to avoid them but it just goes to show one cannot be too careful!

My biggest *potential* clanger occurred during my work on Volume 1 of *The Blitz*. Eric Munday had prepared a chapter for me on radar — radio-location as it was then called — and I had been fortunate to acquire a huge album of beautiful photographs illustrating the early stations. However, the captioning was purely technical on the various types of equipment shown — the locations themselves not being given. One shot that I wanted to use was a good view of an unnamed coastal site but of course I need to take a comparison to go with it. I examined maps of the whole of the English east coast, looking for the holiday camp visible in the background, and I thought I had nailed it down near Filey in Yorkshire. I therefore made arrangements to hire an aircraft from the nearest airfield (Bridlington); when I arrived I discovered to my incredible good fortune that my pilot was to be none other than 'Ginger' Lacey — one of the aces of the Battle of Britain — then working there as a flying instructor. Anyway, I took the photo but when the film was developed, I was not happy with the match — a gut feeling said that something was wrong. I looked at the coastline again and another potential site looked likely at Hopton in Norfolk. However, before hiring another aircraft I first carried out a ground reconnaissance and discovered that the camp in the background — now called Potter's — still existed and that the nearby radar site matched the features in the wartime view which I then realised had been taken, not from an aircraft, but from one of the masts. So, a relief that I had avoided an unforgivable error (see also page 136 of *The Blitz Then and Now,* Volume 1) but an expensive mistake.

Nearly my biggest mistake. *Above:* **The picture I needed to match for including in the radio-location chapter in Volume 1 of *The Blitz Then and Now* but no location was given on the original print to help identify the site.**

Left: **The aerial oblique I nearly used taken at Filey, Yorkshire, instead of the correct one** *(right)* **at Hopton, Norfolk.**

Karel Margry, who researched and wrote the Torgau article in issue 88, was pleased to hear that not all of the historic Elbe bridge, which was so surreptitiously blown up by the German authorities in June 1994, has fallen victim to the melting furnaces. In fact, parts of it are preserved in two different places. In Torgau itself, the local Mercedes-Benz dealer, Johannes Beloch, bought up a section of the bridge and had it erected on the lawn of his business on Gewerbering 21 on the west side of town. The memorial was unveiled by Bill Robertson, the leader of the Jeep patrol that made the first contact at Torgau, on April 23, 1995, during the 50th anniversary of the Elbe link-up. (Incidentally, it was while at Torgau that Bill received a phone call inviting him to join President Clinton as honourary veteran to the VE-Day commemorations in Moscow scheduled for the following month.)

Peter Schenk, our long-time reader and contributor in Berlin, then drew our attention to another surviving piece of the historic bridge, this one being preserved at the steel engineering firm of Rüter in the Hörde district of Dortmund in the German Ruhr industrial area, some 300 miles distant from Torgau. Rüter was actually one of the firms which helped to build the bridge back in 1895. Present-day director Ewald Rüter conceived the idea, both because of the span's wartime history and because it represented a prime example of the 'hot riveting' technique so typical of bridge construction in former days. In a semi-covert action, Rüter loaded several sections of the demolished bridge on a low-loader and transported them to Hörde, commissioning architects Heinz Hetschold and Hans Peter Müller to design a memorial. Weighing 15 tons and 12 metres long, it was dedicated on July 28, 1995. Part of the ceremony was a demonstration of 'hot riveting', some of the rivet holes having been left open for that purpose. (In fact, it took Ewald Rüter a while before he found someone who still mastered the old craft.) A plaque on the opposite side of Notkirchenstrasse explains the memorial.

Von der Elbe an die Ruhr

Brücke von Torgau in Dortmund

VDI-N, Dortmund, 28. 7. 95 – Die vor knapp einem Jahr in einer Nacht- und Nebelaktion gesprengte Elbbrücke von Torgau ist für an Technikgeschichte Interessierte nicht ganz verloren. Teile des Baudenkmals wurden auf das Gelände eines der Erbauer überführt und dort baulich verankert.

Dortmund ist um ein geschichtsträchtiges Industriedenkmal reicher. Auf dem Gelände des Stahlbauunternehmens Rüter in Hörde wurde ein 12 m langes und 15 t schweres überarbeitetes Segment der berühmten Elbebrücke von Torgau der Öffentlichkeit übergeben. Geschäftsführer Ewald Rüter initiierte und realisierte das großangelegte

Zum Aneinanderfügen einzelner Teile der historischen Stahlbrücke mußte die alte Warmniettechnik neu belebt werden. Die glühend eingezogenen und dann geschlagenen Nieten sorgen jetzt für eine kraftschlüssige Verbindung.

Ewald Rüter, whose steel business was one of the firms that originally built the historic road bridge across the Elbe river at Torgau, was determined to preserve something for posterity. Mounting a 'raid' on the demolished spans, he removed a 15-ton section and took it back to Dortmund. The resulting memorial was unveiled in July 1995 — the whole exercise costing around DM100000. (say roughly £30,000).

It is amazing how quickly places change and, as I have said many times, we can only record the scene as a snapshot at one precise moment in time. Sometimes, even before the film is out of the camera, the view may have altered which is why I am always interested to see readers' own comparisons taken at a later date. Thomas Zuijderland of Oegstgeest, Holland, took issue 88 to Germany to follow up Karel's story on the US-Soviet link-up. Look what he found at Dahlen (page 4) within two years — part of the massive expenditure to improve the infrastructure of former East Germany.

Karel Margry's story on the Belsen concentration camp (issue 89) prompted a few readers to raise the question of the first British unit to enter the camp. One unit claiming this unenviable distinction is the Special Air Service, both the 1st SAS and the 2nd SAS claiming to have had Jeep parties at the camp before anyone else. Mr Frank Gleeson, a veteran of 2nd SAS who now lives in Bannalec, France, wrote to us:

'It is enterely incorrect to state that the first British troops to discover and enter Belsen were Royal Artillery. Belsen was first discovered by 2nd SAS Jeep reconnaissance soldiers operating behind German front lines on Operation 'Archway'. Our troop of three Jeeps under the command of Lieutenant Marcks (a German Jew) were searching an address in Celle for a German gas rocket fuel scientist and his family. They were absent when we called at their home during the night.

'Next morning, we were mystified by the strange sickly smell that was evident in the town centre of Celle so we "followed our noses" and drove through the main gates of this place. As I was an escaped PoW from the Germans in France, I sensed that this was no barracks but another example of German evil. I was rear gunner on the armoured Jeep; the front gunner, Corporal Higgins, could not comprehend the first two inmates we saw who, wearing striped pyjama suits, were shuffling along each holding a chamber pot in front of their private parts. I explained to him how a dog could be trained to carry a newspaper in its mouth, so then these two pitiful creatures had been trained. And if these chamber pots were not carried correctly, then over would come the nine-foot SS whip.

'I remember clearly to this day, the sorted heaps of spectacles, children shoes and various blonde and other coloured clusters of hair and could think of no explanation for these. Curiosity made me open the door of one of these long wooden huts. I managed one pace forward, then found I could not go further. I could feel the hair on the back of my neck stiffening with the sight and smell of so much horror and depravity. We did not see a single enemy in this place.

'Returning to Celle, we demanded from the Mayor why he allowed such a place to function. He replied there was no such place — English propaganda he declared! So Major Peter Power put this large, fat German and his wife and daughter, also large and fat, and they were driven up and into the camp. Here they all fell down on their knees and wept.

'Perhaps SAS records will show the date we first entered Belsen, but we were usually two to three days ahead of the British Army. I reckon we spent only some few hours in Celle.'

Faced with this letter, we asked our researcher David List (see issue 99) to locate the relevant records in the Public Record Office. It turns out that, as far as 2nd SAS is concerned, confusion has arisen, caused by the fact that the Belsen camp lies close to both Bergen and Celle, with both town names in post-war times being used to refer to the Belsen camp — a confusion aggravated by the fact that there also existed a horror camp in Celle itself.

SAS operation 'Archway' was initially a two-squadron Jeep operation with men drawn from both 1st and 2nd SAS Regiments. It was later augmented by a third Jeep squadron made up from 2nd SAS. At the time of Belsen, 'Archway' was deployed as recce for both 15th Scottish and 11th Armoured Divisions. The 2nd SAS squadron under Major Peter Power — to which Mr Gleeson belonged — was operating in the 15th Division area and had been charged by Military Government with arresting various suspects. Mr Gleeson's section commander was Lieutenant F. R. Marx.

On April 12, 1945 — three days before the liberation of Belsen camp — Power's squadron discovered a concentration camp at Celle: the one described by Mr Gleeson. However, this was not Belsen, but a smaller camp, as becomes clear from the various unit war diaries. At 1440 hours on April 12, 2nd SAS reported to VIII Corps:

'Position at CELLE. All HQs mentioned evacuated. 1200 enemy wounded in hospital. 100 Poles wounded and sick without attention. 500 civil prisoners political and allied shortly out of food.'

That same day, 15th Scottish Div reported to 2nd Army:

'Concentration camp containing about 240 political PW of various nationalities incl German, area 5949 [*i.e. Celle*]. Some victims condition appalling. Dead and dying being evacuated. Remainder being dealt with by medical.'

Next day, April 13, the 15th Div Intelligence Summary included the following:

'Many of us have had the opportunity of seeing, at the CELLE concentration camp, the incredible state to which German treatment of over-work, undernourishment, brutal treatment and complete lack of hygiene and medical treatment can reduce a human being. Suffice it to say that the worst that one has heard of those places is obviously no understatement of the horrors of which the

Left: **Karel had a real treat when he returned to Torgau in April 1995 when he had the pleasure of having his photo taken at the Kreinitz ferry site (pages 9-10) with Igor Belousovitch, former Pfc and member of the Craig patrol who took the historic snapshots on pages 12-13 of issue 88.** *Right:* **Comparison on the road to Clanzschwitz (page 12-13).**

AM 25. APRIL 1945 TRAFEN ZWEI PATROUL-
LEN DER US-ARMY IM RAUM STREHLA-LO-
RENZKIRCH-KRGHNITZ AUF SOLDATEN DER
ROTEN ARMEE. AN DIESER STELLE UBER-
QUERTEN DIE KOTZEBUE- UND DIE CRAIG-
PATROUILLE, DER AMERIKANISCHEN 1. ARMEE
MIT EINER ZIEHFAHRE DIE ELBE UND TRA-
FEN AUF DIE ROTARMISTEN DER 5. GARDE-
ARMEE.

Two years later, Thomas Zuijderland found that a new memorial plaque had been erected at the Elbe ferry site at Kreinitz.

Germans are capable. The survivors of this camp of disease and death have been carried on stretchers by the citizens of CELLE to one of the German hospitals in the town.'

This is confirmed by the VIII Corps log (April 12):

'All the occupants were immediately evacuated, the SAS compelling local civilians to act as stretcher bearers.'

At this time, the Belsen camp was still in German hands — in fact the Germans had only just opened the negotiations to declare the area around the typhus-ridden camp a free zone. The first British troops did not reach it until April 15.

The other SAS unit said to be the first into Belsen was the 1st SAS, in particular a Jeep party of 'Poatforce' (named after Major Harry Poat, OC of A Squadron) led by Major John Tonkin, of 'T' Troop (and including a.o. Sergeant-Major Bob Bennett, Corporal Gunning and Lance Corporal Duncan Ridler); and another Jeep party led by the legendary commander of 1st SAS, Lieutenant-Colonel 'Paddy' Blair Mayne.

As for Major Tonkin, he was indeed at Belsen on April 15, but his party was very probably not the first one in. As explained in issue 89, Lieutenant-Colonel Bob Daniell of the 13th Royal Horse Artillery had already entered the camp about 10 a.m.; Tonkin seems to have appeared on the scene later, although the exact time of his arrival cannot be established. SAS records only indicate that the SAS main force was still at Winsen as late as 6 p.m.:

'Sitrep at 1800 hrs 15 April. Poatforce with Inns of Court area WINSEN 4756 waiting for 11 Armd Div advance on BERGEN 5070 to carry out small task in conc camp.'

In all likelyhood, Tonkin arrived about the same time as Captain J.W. Gray, the Phantom officer with 11th Armoured Division. In his report, Gray states he himself entered the camp at 1615 hours 'shortly after ADMS and DADMS 11th Armd Div. Psych Warfare Offr with loud hailer [*Lieutenant Sington*] had just entered camp to broadcast instructions to prisoners'.

Tonkin and his men were on a private mission, having come to look for SAS men lost on Operation 'Bulbasket' in France the previous summer. Going into the camp, they failed to find any of these men (who had in fact already been executed by the Germans), but they did find someone else, a secret agent whom Tonkin had known in France.

Together with Gray, Tonkin next went to the Wehrmacht barracks up the road to report to Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor of the 63rd Anti-tank Regiment, where they arrived just after the latter had concluded his talk with Oberst Harries and Schmidt. In Taylor's report:

'Immediately after the interview a Phantom officer arrived with information that there was shooting in Camp 1. A SAS officer at the same time reported that he had found a soldier of his unit who was a prisoner in Camp 1. He was given permission to remove this man, by name Jenkinson, and later reported he had done so.'

In fact, Tonkin returned to Camp 1 with Taylor and Gray, as becomes clear from Gray's report:

'OC [*Taylor*], 2i/c 63 A Tk Regt, Psych Warfare Offr [*Sington*], Major Tonkin and Patrol Offr [*Gray*], with dets 63 A Tk Regt and SAS, proceeded to Camp C [*i.e. Camp 1*] with two Wehrmacht offrs [*Harries and Schmidt*].

Permission was obtained from OC 63 A Tk Regt to search for British subject supposed to be in camp, who was thought might be SAS. Major Tonkin, Patrol Offr and four members of SAS entered camp, and with some difficulty found their man who is Jenkinson, naturalised Frenchman, member of Special Forces. Captured while in French Army 1940, escaped 1941 and reached England via North Africa, Argentine, America, Canada. Became naturalised on arrival England, joined Special — or Auxiliary — Forces, landed in France by Lysander. Captured by Gestapo 11 Nov 43, the day he was due to return to England and has since spent 15 months in various conc camps incl Hermann Goering Works, Brunswick. Bona fides checked by major Tonkin who dropped in same area and vouches for his knowledge of local places and FFI personalities.'

(Tonkin left 'Jenkinson' in the care of Gray, who left Belsen with him that same evening.)

As for Colonel Mayne, although SAS historian Anthony Kemp questioned his being at Belsen at all owing to the fact that his unit at that time was some 60 miles distant, it appears he did indeed visit the camp — but only on April 16, when he was on a trip to see one of his squadron commanders. It is known that Mayne's driver, Lance-Corporal Billy Hull, was so enraged by what he saw at the camp that he shot some of the SS guards, including three women (it would take him 40 years to admit this, to Mayne's biographers).

The end conclusion of all this is that Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Daniell of the 13th Royal Horse Artilery, who inspected Belsen at about 10 a.m. on April 15, remains on record as the first British officer to enter the camp. (Brigadier Daniell died at Tostock near Bury St Edmunds in December 1996 aged 95.)

Karel's excellent research for the Torgau issue made him somewhat of an expert in the eyes of the local community and he was asked by the 50th anniversary committee to chair a historical seminar on the Elbe link-up — hence his quick return visit. *Above:* **Here he discusses a point with Bill Robertson, left, and Torgau historian Karl-Heinz Lange, centre. No sooner had Karel completed this task was he onto his next mission: Belsen. There has been much controversy over which individual or person was the first to reach the camp — hardly the most important of issues — but nevertheless Karel has now conducted further investigation in the light of readers correspondence on the subject based on further research by David List at the PRO.**

One of my favourite stories — but for which Karel took the pictures — is the Neunte Elfte procession (issue 66) held by Hitler to commemorate the attempted putsch in November 1923. I like any ceremonial, and I like symbolism: be it the caprisoned horse of a fallen commander in an American military funeral; the perfect goose-step of the Soviet memorial guards; or the carrying of the 'Blood Flag' every November 11 (which is tomorrow as I write this in 1997). In 1975, I retraced the processional route in Munich from the Bürgerbräukeller (which was then still standing) to the Königsplatz, where the 16 martyrs lay in the Ehrenmal but, when we came to finally put the story together ten years later, I decided we needed to retake the photos and, to make it special, to take them on the exact day. So Karel marched the route all on his own on November 11, 1987. This was another of the locations I asked Karel to check up during his '100th issue' tour . . . and look what he found! We knew there were plans afoot to return the Königsplatz to its 19th century appearance (after Hitler had it paved as a parade square) but now there are even information panels beside the ruined Ehrenmal explaining it all. How times change.

Discoveries sent in by John Terniotis of Athens following publication of issue 90 in November 1995. *Left:* **'There are several fuselage sections from SM82s on the island of Rhodes', wrote John, and 'the bomb fin is possibly from a German 250kg.'** *Right:* **'I also discovered this Panzer I turret mounted on a strong-point pillbox in the Athens area.'**

'You can imagine my surprise when I opened your letter of April 11', I replied to Marcus Fernando of Kings Heath, Birmingham. 'I would like to include an extract from it in a future issue of *After the Battle*. Could I also copy the photograph you have?' So what had so surprised me in Mr Fernando's letter? It was an amazing coincidence.

Marcus: 'I was fascinated by the Cocos Island article by Wing Cdr Derek Martin (ATB No. 91) as one of those executed (G. B. De Silva) was a relative of mine, and I was in the process of researching his death for my family history when your magazine appeared! It was therefore with great excitement that I read the article in *After the Battle.*

'Some years ago, while visiting my father in Canada, I was flicking through the old family albums when I came across a photograph of a young Indian man in military dress. It was a photograph I had never seen before. My curiosity aroused, I asked my father who the young man was. He replied: "That's my cousin Benny. There's a bit of a story attached to him. . . ."

I sat enthralled as my father unfolded the tale of Benny — Benedict de Silva — one of three men executed for their part in the mutiny on the Cocos Islands; an event unique in the whole of the Second World War.

'I had been researching the subject to the best of my abilities but very little evidence was available at first; the War Office documents were only released last year, and then only in a censored form. My father has a file on the subject, and was able to supply me with accounts of the mutiny, as well as letters written by Benny and by the military authorities. Piece by piece, I began to build up a more complete picture of the events of that fateful spring of 1942.

'On the night of May 8/9 of that year, a group of Sri Lankan (Ceylonese) gunners, led by Bombadier Gratien Fernando (no relation) mutinied against their British officers. In the ensuing chaos, the two English officers were wounded, two Ceylonese gunners were seriously wounded, and one Ceylonese gunner was killed.

'Inevitably, a court-martial followed. Seven men were sentenced to death, although later four had their sentences commuted to imprisonment. Fernando, De Silva, and Gauder had their sentences confirmed. All were executed by hanging in August 1942.

'At the trial the men were allowed no defence. In some cases it would seem that the statements of some of the accused were deemed inadmissable. Certainly, many of the men claimed that they were unfairly tried, or had been misled over the procedures which were to be followed.

'An appeal was made, and a second trial was held. This time, my grandparents arranged for Benny to be represented by a lawyer, but to no avail. Four men had their sentences commuted to imprisonment, but Fernando, Gauder and Benny were once again sentenced to death.

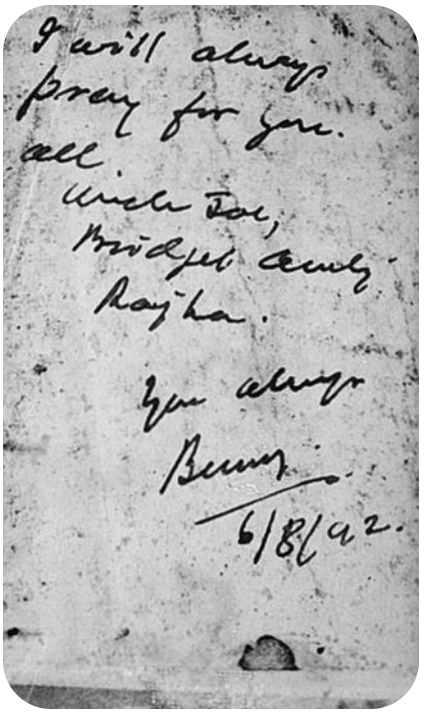
'The three were held at Cocos prison, and then moved to Ceylon to await execution. There, they were detained at the Hulftsdorp Remand Jail, guarded by a detachment from the Ceylon Garrison Artillery.

'One of the guards, Bombadier Yusef, says that spirits were high among the doomed men. Gauder was stoical, Fernando was unrepentant, and Benny placed his faith and hopes in his religion. My father also asserts that he even managed to convert his fellow prisoners. But he never gave up hope.

'On July 27, a letter was sent to my grandmother from HQ Ceylon Command, confirming the sentence and giving no hope of reprieve. The letter curtly concludes: "Every possible alleviating circumstance has been taken into consideration and the decision is now final. There is no appeal and the sentence will be carried out by hanging shortly."

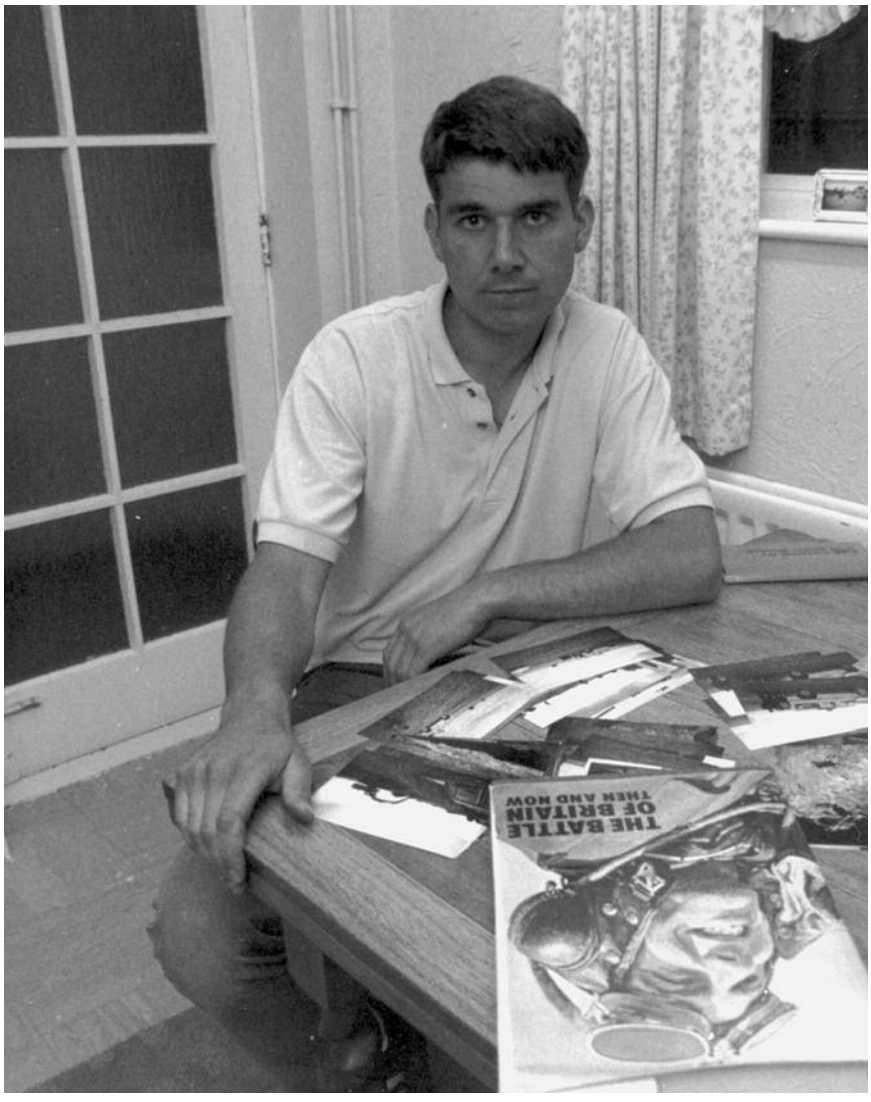
'Benny, Fernando and Gauder were executed, but as a final gesture, my grandparents succeeded in getting special dispensation to have Benny's body buried in the civilian cemetery. His grave therefore lies in the Catholic part of the general cemetery in Colombo. For years it lay unmarked, but eight years ago a stone was finally erected in his honour. [The Sri Lankan authorities could give me no information on where the individuals were buried — Ed.]

'My researches into these events continue, and I would therefore be most grateful for *any* information, however small, relating to the mutiny. Few eyewitnesses are still alive, but perhaps the descendants of those who were involved can offer fresh evidence; memories of events as told to them, documents or memorabilia relating to the incident. I try to keep an open mind, and am happy to judge matters with fresh eyes in the light of any new evidence. If anyone has anything to offer, please contact me via *After the Battle,* or direct at 21 Avenue Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7TH.'



Funny how my book keeps getting used as a prop! Mark Kirby's motives in wanting to give our former warriors of the air proper burials are honourable yet he received more unfavourable publicity in September 1996 when he attempted to recover the remains of Polish RAF Sergeant Pilot Stanislaw Duszynski without having first obtained permission from the Ministry of Defence. 'These men were heroes', said Mark, 'and they deserve a funeral with military honours'. My own feelings are that the RAF should have checked all the sites of wartime crashes thoroughly at the end of the war. This was done with thoroughness on the Continent by the RAF's Missing Research and Enquiry Service but someone overlooked the fact that Britain was equally a battlefield having been fought over in the air.

Mark Kirby (see issue 92, page 53) was again in the news in September 1996 concerning the excavation of another wartime airman's crash site without having first obtained a licence from the Ministry of Defence under the Protection of Military Remains Act. This act came into force in 1986 but it was challenged by Mark in 1994 when he recovered the remains of a Spitfire pilot who had crashed in 1941. Mark was taken to court by the Ministry but given an absolute discharge. Heartened by the Coroner's declaration that the Ministry had no jurisdiction over the recovery of human remains, Mark went ahead and searched for another missing pilot at the request of the family of Polish Sergeant Pilot Stanislaw Duszynski. This particular crash on September 11, 1940 had already been investigated by another wreck group in the 1970s (see *The Battle of Britain Then and Now,* page 444). However, in this case, Mark's attempted excavation was halted by the police before any trace of the Polish pilot — apart from pieces of uniform — had come to light. Since then, as reported in our last issue, Dick Walker bypassed the act to ensure that the remains of 2nd Lieutenant Robert Hymans were recovered from the Thames Estuary.



'Ein Deutscher Soldat.' The headstone in Felixstowe Cemetery which started Joe Potter off on his quest.

'I am writing to you as you may be interested in a follow-up on Bob Collis's piece on page 287-8 of Volume 3 of *The Blitz Then and Now.'* So wrote Joe Potter of Felixstowe, Suffolk, in February 1995.

'Some time ago I was visiting my mother's grave in Felixstowe Cemetery and I got talking to the cemetery superintendent about war graves. I said that I was wondering who was buried in a grave simply marked "Ein Deutscher Soldat" whereupon the superintendent told me that he had seen some reference to an ID disc in the records for this particular burial. I thought that if I could obtain this number and an approximate date of death it might be possible to get a name put on this grave — my main reason being that there may be a relative somewhere who would like to know where he was buried.

'I started my research in our local library with your Blitz books but had to wait a very long time for each one as there was such a waiting list. After pleading with our Town Clerk, she condescended to let me look at the Burial Register, and there it was: "58214/270". It had been added by the funeral director as an afterthought. The airman I was interested in was found the day after the one in Bob's piece, so I contacted the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Maidenhead and they told me to write to the German War Graves in Kassel. From them I discovered that the pilot of the plane and his radio op/gunner lie side by side and that they had even had a joint funeral on August 4, 1943. I enclose a photo of the grave as it is now and will send another when the new stone is erected.'

The grave proved to be that of Oberfeldwebel Leo Raida of 16/KG2 shot down on the night of July 13/14, 1943.

As he lay buried right next to his pilot, Feldwebel Franz Zwissler, who has a named headstone, it is difficult to understand how Leo Raida was never identified at the time. We listed him as missing on page 286 of Volume 3 of *The Blitz* . . . but now, thanks to Joe, he has been found.

In September 1997, Heinz Möllenbrok, another former member of KG2, came back to Britain on a sad pilgrimage to visit the graves of his crew who lost their lives when his Dornier was shot down on August 11, 1940 (see page 206 of *The Blitz*). Heinz was wounded and taken to the 'Luftwaffe Hospital' at Woolwich (see issue 70); now the 76-year-old Heinz came to pay tribute to his colleagues buried at the Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof at Cannock Chase. Unfortunately, Gefreiters Gerhard Reinicke and Johann Golob have been separated in death: although twin headstones are the norm at Cannock, the men now lie side by side in graves 37 and 38 of Block 1.

I must apologise for a slip in issue 92 (page 48) where I mistakenly accredited Violette Szabo with the Victoria Cross instead of the George Cross (see issue 86). As far as the merits of the awards are concerned, both are deemed to be equal, the VC being a military honour given for bravery in the face of the enemy, the GC intended primarily for civilians but, when awarded to service personnel, is for an action for which a military honour would not normally be granted.

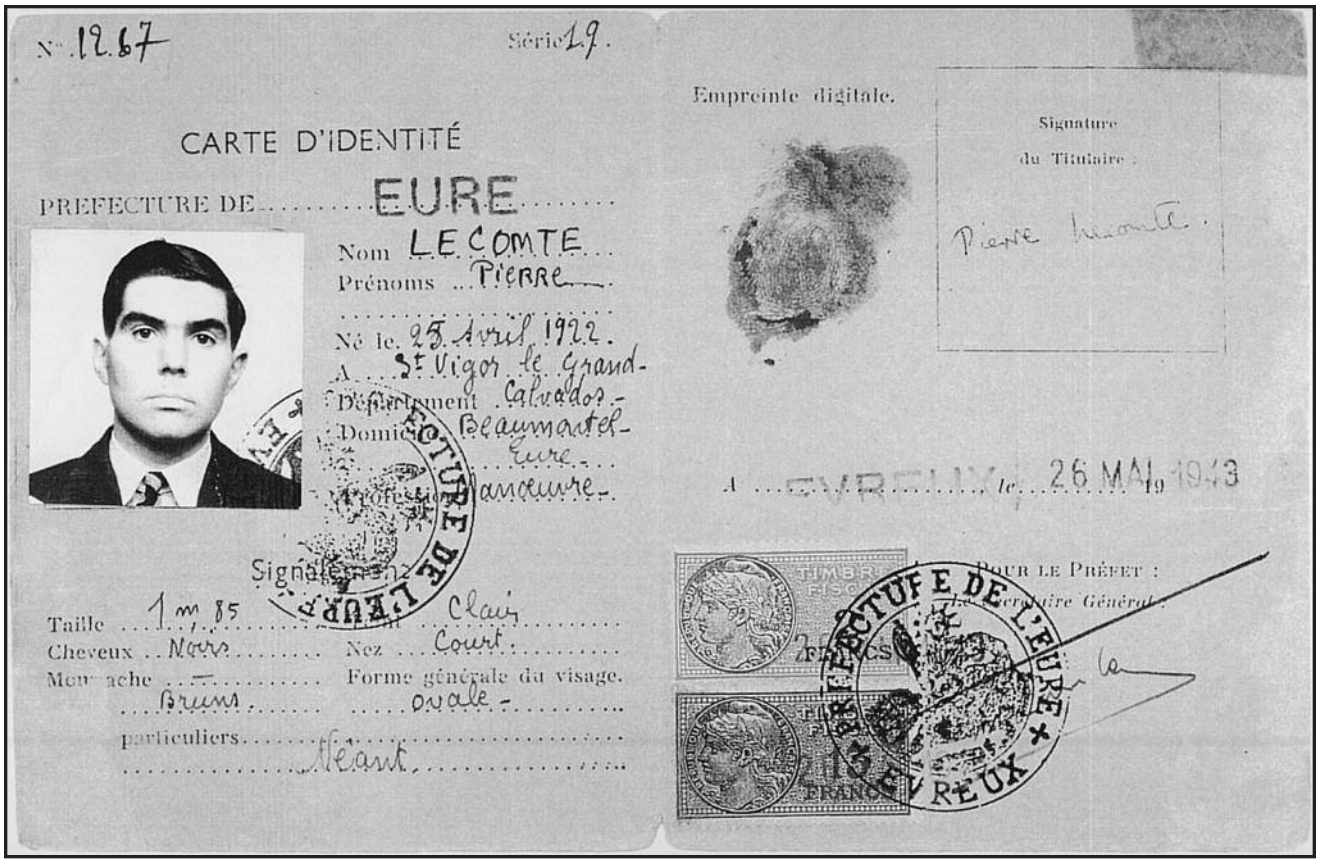
Bearing in mind that Violette was officially serving in the Woman's Transport Service, and her citation (see page 52 of issue 86) at least in part specifies her gun battle with the Germans, she would seem to have had a valid claim to the Victoria Cross. David List, our dedicated researcher into the secrets of the Public Record Office, recently discovered file WO32/20708 which covers on-going correspondence in the 1960s between the Government and Dame Irene Ward who was actively campaigning for Violette's George Cross to be replaced by the Victoria Cross. The file reveals that she was first recommended for the Military Cross by Colonel Maurice Buckmaster, the Head of 'F' Section of SOE, on June 27, 1945 and that although the GC was substituted for the MC, the War Office held the view that her conduct in action, while exceptional, was not such to merit the award of the VC. The award of the GC was made with particular reference to her behaviour in captivity.

David also uncovered a gem buried in file AIR20/8913. Pictures of the Prime Minister in RAF uniform — certainly in the latter part of the war — show him wearing 'Wings' denoting pilot status but Churchill never undertook a course of flying training. In 1947, possibly while preparing his history of the Second World War, the ex-Prime Minister, could not recall how he had obtained his 'Wings'! The official explanation given to him was that it was an honorary award, conferred on him shortly after landing in North Africa in 1943, and that it was the first and last instance of such an award being given. Such are the insignificant, yet, fascinating, trivia lost to history.

The differences between the views of the United Kingdom and United States governments over the release of wartime documents was a significant factor in the early days of producing the magazine. There are several different time periods embargoing British records, depending on their sensitivity, the majority being available for inspection after 30 years but those, such as personal records and court-martials, subject to a 70-year rule. Others, like the 'Mincemeat' file (issue 54) are closed for an even longer period although Roger Morgan cracked that nut in 1995 through the inadvertent release of a separate Admiralty file on naval deception (see issue 94 and below, page 62).

Heinz is a tireless worker for Anglo-German relations and he went on to Swanwick, in Derbyshire, where he had spent more than a year as a prisoner-of-war. The camp's main claim to fame is the attempted escape by Franz von Werra (see issue 2), and it is nice to see that the end of the tunnel dug by von Werra and his fellow prisoners has now been suitably marked. The camp was turned into a conference centre in 1948.

Heinz then came on to see me at Plaistow where we have a display of artefacts in Church House of items recovered during our journeys to the battlefields over the past quarter-century.



This phoney identity card was provided by the French Resistance to then-Flying Officer Stanley Booker, a photo in civilian clothes being supplied to all aircrew flying over Europe.

Serving with No. 10 Squadron, Stanley's Halifax was shot down by a night fighter while returning from bombing the rail junction at Trappes outside Paris on June 2/3 just before D-Day.

'I was most interested to receive this morning your latest edition of *After the Battle* No. 93,' wrote Squadron Leader Stanley Booker in August 1996, 'especially the article referring to the "Treasure Trove" that was recovered from Buchenwald concentration camp.

'On page 18 of your article there is a reference to "The probable British spies". In actual fact, they were both senior members of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE). Captain Christopher Burney of "F" Section, SOE, had been captured in Paris in 1942, and had spent over two years in Buchenwald, being in fact one of the only four British SOE/SIS agents alive when the camp was liberated by the US Forces. Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas likewise had been captured in Paris, whilst a member of "RF" Section of SOE. He was despatched to Buchenwald in a party of 37 Allied SOE/SIS agents being held in Compiègne Prison, arriving in Buchenwald on 17th August 1944. Within a few weeks of the arrival of this ill-fated party in the camp, 31 of them were cruelly garrotted in the cellars of the evil crematorium — see your photo on page 19.

'Whilst all this was going on, I was one of the party of 168 Allied airmen, all of whom had been captured in civilian clothes after our escape line had been penetrated by the German security authorities, and after Gestapo custody and interrogation in Paris, was despatched to Buchenwald in the contingent of 2,000 French Resistance prisoners held in Fresnes Prison, in the last train to escape from Paris before the city was liberated.

'As designated "Terrorflieger", the Allied airmen were kept incommunicado in a special squalid quarantine camp on the perimeter of the main camp barrack area — just 250 metres from the vast industrial complex, the Deutsche Ausrüstungs-Werke (DAW) and the vast Gustloff Werke II manufacturing essential V-2 rocket gyro guidance systems for the underground V-weapon assembly plant at Dora/Nordhausen [to be featured in our next issue] As the photographs on page 20 show, four days after our arrival in the concentration camp, the USAAF carried out a remarkable bombing attack on the Buchenwald industrial complex. The raid was carried out between 1218 and 1234 hours, ensuring the absolute minimum of prisoner worker casualties, this being the normal "soup break" period when the factories were on skeleton staffing.

'For professional aircrew, mainly experienced Bomber Command personnel, being so close to 300 tons of bursting high explosive was quite a harrowing experience, to say the least, as was to be the wrath of the SS authorities immediately afterwards, who had lost a considerable number of their soldiers and families when their SS domestic site received major damage. But it paid a compliment to the discipline and tenacity of the Allied contingent by the efficient manner in which they undertook the salvage operation to recover (and personally destroy) special material from the blazing Gestapo complex, as well as the daunting task of casualty recovery, with the absolute minimum of first-aid equipment.

'As one of the few Royal Air Force survivors, I have over the years taken it upon myself to return to the former establishment, where I have an excellent personal understanding with the German Gedenkstätte authorities, and have spent many years researching and collating the various recovered wartime SS official documentation, to ensure the commemoration of the British involvement in the infamous establishment, where there remains a modest anonymous memorial tablet, set up by the DDR authorities in 1958, to commemorate the murder of the British and Canadian Servicemen (i.e. the SOE personnel lost in Sept/October, 1944).'

The timing of the publication of the 'Treasure Trove' article in issue 93 was another remarkable coincidence as it came at a time when Greville Janner, the Member of Parliament who chairs the Holocaust Educational Trust, began asking awkward questions in Parliament about the reluctance of the authorities in Switzerland to disclose details of Nazi gold still held in Swiss banks. Mr Janner used several hundred copies of issue 93 to publicise his cause which eventually led to the Swiss reluctantly agreeing to consider the matter and eventually, and exceptionally for their normally secretive banking system, to publish lists of dormant bank accounts dating from the Second World War.

Also published in issue 93 was the story of the explosions at the gunpowder factory at Waltham Abbey. In August 1996, the future of the site remained in the balance but two months later the National Heritage Lottery Fund announced a £6.5 million grant, which also secured a further donation of £5.5 million from the Ministry of Defence, to convert the 175-acre site into a huge museum and heritage centre by the year 2000.

When Bryn Elliott and I visited the local cemetery to seek out the graves of the workers killed in the blasts, we found the plot completely unmarked, and I immediately commissioned headstones to redress what the factory management should have done during the war. But then the trouble started. The Town Council who own the cemetery refused to give permission for the erection of the headstones saying that the permission of the grave owner — the now defunct Royal Gunpowder Factory — must be obtained first. British Aerospace took over the successor organisation, Royal Ordnance, but my personal appeal to the BAe chairman was buck-passed. In the circumstances, one would have hoped that red tape could for once be swept aside to commemorate the deaths of four forgotten casualties of war.

Karel Margry's depth of research has earned him many accolades from readers and particularly for his unique work in writing up Operation 'Ginny' for issue 94. From Home Care Nurse Jane Crosby in New York came a simple note on behalf of John Lepore, a member of the 'Ginny' Mission Landing Party (first attempt, February 27/28, 1944). 'Message: Words are inadequate to express the depth of my appreciation for your article, "The Dostler Case". A gnawing wonder at what my buddies experienced after they departed for the second attempt has been put to rest.'

Then Curtis A. Cassano wrote from Bennington, Vermont: 'On behalf of my aunt, the Tremonte family, and for myself, I offer you a most sincere "THANK YOU" for this article especially, and for all the other fine works that have preceded it.

'My father, who was the son of an Italian immigrant father and French-Canadian mother, was an American GI. After the war, he was assigned to one of the public kitchens in Wiesbaden set up by the Allied Occupational Forces to feed the masses and it was there that he met my mother who was born in Hamburg-Altona. They eventually married and my father brought his "war bride" back to the States.

'Before my father left his family's home in Westport, Connecticut, to ship overseas in WWII, there was a young woman named Carmela Tremonte, who was also from Westport, and apparently she was madly in love with my father, or so my father's surviving eldest sister recently told me. Carmela was also from a large Italian family having six brothers and three sisters. According to my aunt, although she was never certain if my father had feelings as strong for Carmela as hers were for him, Carmela was none the less heartbroken when my father stopped writing her during the war and then came back with his German bride. Before his death, my father confided in my aunt that he married

'They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old . . .' A mind set at rest about the fate of a forgotten hero of Operation 'Ginny'.

my mother because "he just couldn't leave her behind as bad as things were there (in Germany)".

'In the late 1940s, my father's family moved to Vermont but still over the years, Carmela remained in touch with the family. Carmela married twice and was predeceased by each of her two husbands. I remember one or two of Carmela's visits to my grandmother's house in Vermont in the early 1960s and I recall her teaching me to dance to the Rolling Stone's song *Satisfaction.*

'But another memory I had from my childhood in the early '60s in connection with Carmela had to do my aforementioned aunt pulling out an old scrap-book containing New York *Daily News* clippings from 1945. I remember the yellowed scraps of newsprint showing a Nazi general in his last moments before a firing squad. My aunt had saved the clippings because one of the GIs executed on that mission was Carmela's brother, Liberty Tremonte. When I removed issue 94 from its envelope, the photograph of General Dostler on the cover immediately conjured up my faded memories of those yellowed newspaper clippings from so long ago. I quickly fingered through the pages and came upon the list of names of those killed on the "Ginny" mission. Unfortunately, I did not know or recall Carmela's maiden name so I called my aunt. When she told me "Tremonte", I then explained to her about the magazine I'd just received and of the article giving a detailed account of the mission and the subsequent execution of the commando team.

'The next day, I went to my aunt's home to show her the magazine. She said that she recalled Liberty Tremonte. She said he was "a short little Italian fella". She remembered that he wanted to get engaged to this big, tall girl during the war but that his mother insisted that they should wait until after the war was over. I pointed out to my aunt the photo in the magazine of Liberty Tremonte's gravestone in the US Military Cemetery outside Florence. My aunt said she never knew where exactly Liberty Tremonte was buried, but had she known before, she would have visited his grave since she and her husband have traveled to Italy a few times in recent years. My aunt explained that they had heard (and believed) that some of the "Ginny" mission GIs had been shot and buried alive. Another story was that the Germans had buried some of the GIs up to their necks in the ground then poured honey on their heads to attract a scourge of ants. My aunt was relieved to read the truth.'

Sorry to lower the tone of *After the Battle* but ever since Rainer Baronsky wrote from Berlin to share this picture with me, I have been dying to use it. A soldier's 'black' humour is often reflected in his erection of funny road signs, this one *(left)* photographed 'close to the Canadian front line in Holland' being a good example. Rainer makes extensive tours in his Jeep and it was during a visit to Austria that he spotted it. 'I drove my Willys to a small village — the name is on the picture', wrote Rainer. 'Many visitors from other countries come to steal that sign so that now it is welded to its post. The people from the village told me that in World War II, all the US troops used to stop there to have their pictures taken besides the sign.' So are there any American veterans out there who can send us a genuine picture of the 1945 period? When I sent a copy to Karel Margry to see if he knew of any in official files, he commented that he particularly liked the complementary notice underneath: 'Bitte nicht so schnell'!

The Daily Telegraph

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The man who was The Man Who Never Was is revealed

ONE OF the last great secrets of the Second World War is finally revealed today as the Man Who Never Was is named.

Anonymous for 53 years, Glyndwr Michael played a posthumous but crucial role in Operation Mincemeat, one of the most successful deception operations ever mounted in warfare.

Michael, who killed himself in a warehouse in London at the age of 34, was the man who unwittingly convinced Hitler's High Command that the Allied invasion of southern Europe in 1943 would be in Sardinia when its real target was Sicily.

The unmasking of Michael is the work of Roger Morgan, a council officer, who has spent much of the past 16 years searching for the name. The invasion of Sicily was, at the time, the greatest amphibious landing in the history of warfare and its relatively low cost in human life was largely due to Michael, a drifter whose insanity had ruled him out of military service.

Michael's body was used by British intelligence agents to play the part of "Major Martin" a junior staff officer, supposedly killed in a plane crash on his way to help Allied HQ in North Africa plan the invasion of Sardinia.

Attached to the corpse, which was launched from the Royal Navy submarine *Seraph*, were cleverly forged documents designed to convince the Abwehr, Germany's military intelligence, that plans for an attack on Sicily were driven from the real target. The deception was so complete that British intelligence officers created a personality for "Martin", planting on Michael's body letters from a fictional girlfriend — written by an MI5 clerk — theatre tickets and even an irate missive from his bank manager.

There is no evidence that his parents were asked for permission to use the body, but Ewen Montagu, the intelligence agent who orchestrated the mission, always said he had sworn to the man's family he would remain anonymous forever.

Britain's ability to intercept German military communications allowed Montagu to confirm within days that the Abwehr believed the documents to be genuine and to telegraph Winston Churchill with the message "Mincemeat swallowed whole".

Mincemeat was one of very few Top Secret wartime operations to be made into a film and was the subject of at least three books. But until today, no one has ever known the true identity of the corpse who became "Major Martin".

The revelation is largely the work of Mr Morgan, a town planning officer with Kensington and Chelsea council.

After pursuing every tiny detail of Operation Mincemeat, he published his findings in the military history magazine *After the Battle* in 1986, but his guess at the identity of the corpse proved to be wrong.

"The truth has now come out in documents, originally deemed to be locked away for 100 years, recently released by the Public Record Office. Mr Morgan is hopeful that Michael, whose burial stone in Spain still records him as Major Martin, will now be recognised.

"I am urging the War Graves Commission to inscribe his name and recognise the important role he played," Mr Morgan said yesterday. "There is a space on the 45th almond as if those who dreamed up the whole thing knew that one day the truth would come out."

Only one mystery remains. Francis Rodriguez, who tends the cemetery, said that until 1994 an unknown hand laid red carnations on the grave on a regular basis. He said: "No one ever saw who did it. Now we will never know."

A most unlikely hero: Page 3

NAVAL IDENTITY CARD No. 148228

ADMIRALTY

The bogus identity card left on Michael's body

I was thrilled for Roger Morgan when he received due credit in the Press following publication of his positive identification of 'Major Martin' in issue 94. Years of hard work had finally paid dividends, the Ministry subsequently confirming that Glyndwr Michael was the correct name, much to the chagrin of Roger's rival in the quest, Colin Gibbon (see issue 64) who had obtained permission to exhume the remains in the grave at Treorchy and carry out a pathological examination to try to prove the validity of his candidate. In the event, with Roger's revelation, the Home Office rescinded Colin's Exhumation Order. Now the Commonwealth War Graves Commission the addition of suitable wording on the gravestone at Huelva as Roger requested at the end of his article.

A nice postscript came the day after *The Daily Telegraph* published the exclusive which I had given them when Jean Leigh came forward to reveal that it was her photograph that had been used for Major Martin's fiancée 'Pam'. During the war, Jean worked as a clerk with MI5 and she had been asked if she could provide a suitable photograph to put in the wallet on the corpse. She explained that a friend had taken the picture just after she had been swimming in the Thames near Oxford. Other girls contributed by composing and writing love letters.

A beautiful sequel to Roger Morgan's triumph in cracking the identity of 'Major Martin' — something which had occupied much of his time for the previous 14 years — was when 'Pam' came forward. Jean Gerard Leigh *(bottom left)* **was a former clerk with MI5 who was asked to provide a suitable photo** *(bottom right)* **to be included in the wallet planted on the corpse.**

In January 1998, the gravestone was removed for the addition of the words: 'Glyndwr Michael served as Major William Martin, RN'.

Tracing former servicemen has never been easy although in the early days I had a very good contact in the Salvation Army who always seemed to come up trumps. Sadly, Brigadier Charles Wood passed on many years ago and today one can count on little help from the MoD. So can anyone help Mathilde trace the chap in this picture — she looks so lovely in her skirt made out of 'window'.

Tracing servicemen from the Second World War becomes increasingly difficult as time takes its toll of yesterday's warriors. But one can still try. I received this letter from Mathilde van de Meerssche of Schoonaarde, Belgium:

'Can you help me find through *After the Battle* Mr Edward Gilkens of the 11th British Tank Division. He helped to liberate Lede by Aalst on September 4, 1944. I am Mathilde van de Meerssche and I was 12 years old when this picture was taken. My dress is decorated with silver ribbons dropped by the English planes to sabotage the German radars. Edward is the soldier without the beret. We have written letters to him but have since lost his address. I think it was Tottenham or 'Cotenham' in London.'

Our Salerno story (issue 95) prompted a letter from one of our long-time readers, Mr H. Michael Irwin from Gosforth near Newcastle upon Tyne. Mr Irwin, who is a retired Lieutenant Commander, RNVR, wrote: 'I had command of an LCS(M) (Landing Craft Support (Medium) and this was hoisted onboard the Dutch liner *Marnix van Sint Aldegonde* (which served as troop ship for 2,500 troops of the US 36th Division) with the approval of the US Navy Chief-of-Staff in *Samuel Chase* prior to leaving Oran. Originally, I was in the *Durban Castle*, but because of shortage of fresh water she never went to Salerno in the initial assault. This was why I transferred to the Dutch liner almost as a stowaway. My crew consisted of six Royal Marines and two naval ratings, all British. My craft had a twin .5-inch power-operated machine gun, a four-inch smoke mortar and CS acid to make smoke screens. I won't go into detail of the horrendous action at Paestum other than to state that we knocked out the German four-barrelled 20mm machine gun on Yellow Beach and opened up the beach. We did in fact put a smoke mortar near the MG and the brushwood surrounding the MG caught fire. Two of my crew were awarded DSMs for this action and a subsequent event in the afternoon of D-Day. There was no recognition whatsoever from the Americans. We also rescued several Americans from the sea.

'I managed to take several photographs of the action which are exclusive to myself. They show casualties on the beach, a shot-down American aircraft, the monitor *HMS Abercrombie* firing into enemy positions just before being mined herself, and other landing scenes.

Michael Irwin: 'My crew before the shelling on the beach. It looked so peaceful here'.

'In 1993, I returned to Salerno for the 50th anniversary celebrations. I had already been back there in 1971 and 1986.'

Chariots of war hitting beach at Salerno, pictured by Michael on the afternoon of D-Day. *Left:* **Downed American fighter and** *right.* **Lieutenant-Commander Irwin's own support landing craft. Note the power-operated twin machine guns.**

Teutoburger Wald Cemetery where wreaths were laid by two former enemies: Günther Scheffler *(left)* and John Gaunt who last met on April 2, 1945. 'I am sure nobody will forget the remarkable day we spent together', wrote Günther later. 'It was a hard fight, this third battle in the Teutoburger Wald . . . this time spent in love and friendship . . . with prayers for all those who died in the second battle.'

The exhaustive study commissioned by the United States Army to investigate any racial bias in the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor during World War II (see issue 96) was published in the US by McFarland & Company Inc in August 1997. UK readers can obtain copies from Shelwing Limited, 4 Pleydell Gardens, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2DN. Acting Secretary of the Army John Shannon ordered that the study be carried out outside the government 'to assure neutrality of judgement' but, paradoxically, that it should be carried out by a historically black college or university. When the US Army advertised in 1993 for a contractor to carry out the necessary research, Professor Daniel Gibran of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, assembled a team of scholars and won the contract.

Britain always seem to lag at least five years behind the United States in new technological developments, so I was delighted to hear from Mr B. Rowley of Tipton, West Midlands, of the 3rd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment Old Comrades' Association, who told me that the Internet had played a part in a reunion between one of his members and the German soldier who had taken him prisoner. He wrote that 'John Gaunt was wounded on the first day of the battle in the Teutoburger Wald — a range of thickly-wooded hills on the east bank of the Dortmund-Ems Canal near Ibbenbüren — and was taken prisoner by Günther Scheffler. They keep in touch over the Internet. On April 2nd, 1997, we took a party of old comrades to Germany to commemorate the 52nd anniversary of the battle and meet Herr Scheffler who, himself, was later made prisoner. What was unusual about this battle is that we had a temporary truce with the enemy to recover our wounded — quite unique.'

Tim Chamberlin, Secretary of the 15th Scottish Recce Association, sent me a nice little story emphasising that 'time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted'. He wrote that 'on the 13th September 1944, a Heavy Daimler Scout Car of No. 6 Troop, 'B' Squadron, 15th Scottish Reconnaissance Regiment, approached the small Belgian town of Moll. The crew, Corporal Reg Ray and Troopers Arthur Watkins and George Bunn, had been informed by the Belgian Resistance that the Germans had withdrawn and were ordered to ascertain the actual situation. There was no apparent sign of life as the vehicle came to halt in the town square but, as the populace realised it was an Allied vehicle, they began to appear in numbers, climbing up on the car with welcoming flags.

'Arthur Watkins, the radio operator/gunner, observed a petite elderly lady pushing her way through the crowd, calling out with a strong Welsh accent: "Is anyone there from Cardiff?" Corporal Ray was, in fact, from the Cardiff area and a lively conversation developed. Suddenly, the vehicle came under small arms fire with shots bouncing off the car. The people scattered. Arthur was just attempting to locate where the fire was coming from through the telescope on the gunsight when he felt a tug on his shoulder and heard the distinctive Welsh voice cry: "They are in the church". The Welsh lady was standing on the engine hatch leaning into the turret "spotting" for the crew. Calling for her to get down and take cover, Arthur placed a couple of well-aimed two-pounder HE shells into the church tower to silence the German gunner. The vehicle then moved forward past the church and awaited the arrival of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders who came up and cleared the town after some sharp fighting with the German rearguard.

'During the day, two 15th Scottish Recce vehicles were put out of action in Moll with five members of the crew being wounded. Arthur and George Bunn returned at the first opportunity the next day concerned as to the well-being of the Welsh lady. It transpired that her maiden name was 'Evans' and that she had married a Belgian miner who had been working in South Wales, the pair of them eventually settling in Moll. Arthur left his address with the lady and eventually a postcard arrived in England depicting the market place pre-war and a note saying "this is what the Church should look like!"

'In September 1995, a party of ex-15th Scottish Reconnaissance Regiment personnel and their wives re-visited scenes of their actions across Belgium, Holland and Germany. Reaching Moll, trooper Arthur Watkins stood at exactly the same spot with Tim Chamberlin standing in for the "Welsh lady née Evans". Alan Westby, former member of the regiment, replaces George Bunn who has not been traced.'

September 1944 — September 1995. Details of a different sort of reunion by former servicemen was sent to me by Tim Chamberlin of the 15th Scottish Recce. He included this very nice comparison taken in Moll, Belgium.

Already yesterday's history is today's memory. As time passes and memories fade, the former use of wartime-vintage buildings is getting lost. In January 1996, Thomas Dunstall pictured this site at Bourne End, Buckinghamshire, about to be demolished.

'Recently in the course of business I had to visit the Andrews Boatyard at Bourne End in Buckinghamshire in connection with its proposed redevelopment as a riverside housing scheme', wrote Thomas Dunstall of Slough in January 1996. 'As you will see from the enclosed photographs, some of the buildings are of WW2 origin and, given the nature of the last incumbents' business — boat building — I wondered if they had in fact been involved in any activities with military connections during the war.

'The large white-painted, pre-cast concrete hut is definitely an "Orlit" which would date from any time between 1941 and 1943 and, whilst I appreciate that it could have been acquired post-war from a purely military establishment and reassembled here, its presence along with the smaller buildings which are blast shelters of solid 9-inch Fletton brick construction with concrete roofs of permanent pre-cast shuttering suggests that in fact all would have been installed at the same time. The main buildings on the site are from an indeterminate date but the site had been a base for the manufacture, sale and maintenance of timber-built Thames river craft, particularly Slipper Launches, from well before 1939.

'The possibility therefore exists that Andrews was employed on some form of quality military-orientated war work — i.e. something that reflected the skills of their staff — possibly related to aviation or marine work (I can't see them making ammunition boxes but who knows?) and I wondered if anyone has any clues. I am intrigued by the sign on the door attached to one of the non-brick buildings saying "Quarantine" but as this was on the inside I suspect the door was obtained second-hand elsewhere as redundant hinge marks can be seen top right on the door. Demolition of this building takes place soon and so another piece of history will disappear.'

Responding to the subject of issue 97 on the fighting on the Alpine front, Jean-Pierre Garnier of Briançon, France, (see issue 98) wrote further about the Maginot Line in the Alps.

'As you know, some time before the war broke out, the French authorities hurriedly ordered the border in the Alps to be fortified, some new forts to be built, others to be modernised. Fort du Janus, towering above Briançon and the nearby valleys, 2543m (7,650 ft) above sea level, was just ready when the war broke out. Quite exceptionally, the fort is still today exactly as it was in 1939, with even the armament still in position; some of it at least, since later a part of it was looted by the Germans, and with the power generators still operating. I happen to belong to a society which is aiming at the protection of such sites and we value the 'Janus' very much. Because of altitude, it can only be reached in the summertime.

'At the beginning of the century, the Italians built a fortress on the top of a peak overlooking the border, 3130m (9,400 ft) in altitude, a titanic job as the top of the mountain had to be lowered by some 200ft to create a flat platform. Eight modern turrets were constructed, each with a 149mm gun. The fortress was manned by a garrison of 320. The turrets were very lightly armoured as it was believed that no land artillery could fire shells so high at the time. The turrets terrified the people living in the area and were a major cause of worry for the military authorities concerned.

'Italy declared war against France on June 10, 1940, Italian troops starting operations on the Montgenèvre pass, where the road crosses the border, at the very foot of the Janus and Chaberton fortresses on June 21. Chaberton was destroyed in a few hours on that very day though the event is hardly remembered today.

'Months beforehand, a battery of heavy mortars (280mm), 6ème Batterie, 154ème R.A.P, had been secretly transported and settled behind a mountain ridge, unseen by the Italians. The commanding officer, Lieutenant Miguet, brilliant at maths, had had several months to make his firing calculations and a total of 59 shells were fired (1 short, 1 long and 57 on the target).

'The impacts were observed and announced from the Fort du Janus, in full view of the Chaberton across the border. The Italians never guessed where the shelling came from. They said later they thought it came from the old fortress in Briançon, and the town therefore had to suffer a few hits. Six of the eight turrets were totally destroyed. The destruction of the turrets might even have been faster, had clouds not interrupted the firing from time to time by making observation impossible.

'In the following days, Miguet waited for the weather to clear up, so he could finish the job but Chaberton remained hidden by the clouds, out of sight, for days on end . . . and then the Armistice was signed on June 25 and it was all over.

'Because of the shelling of Briançon, a strange decision was made when the final Armistice was signed with Italy in 1945: that the top of the Chaberton peak would be French (it still is), while the foot of the mountain remained Italian.'

The duel of the giants. But no doubt of the purpose of Fort du Janus, undoubtedly one of the highest artillery positions in the world. On the left of Jean-Pierre Garnier's picture can be seen the flat top of the mountain in Italy on which its opposing battery — the Chaberton — was emplaced.

John Freitas of Amadora, Portugal, sent me an unusual comparison he had matched up in Lisbon depicting an exchange of German prisoners-of-war from the Afrika-Korps being swapped for American servicemen under the supervision of the Red Cross sometime in 1943. John comments that 'the ship is the *Gripsholm* which I think had made the same trip a few days earlier from Spain. The officer is the German Naval Attaché — Graf Honigenheune with his wife on the right.'

Lisbon, in neutral Portugal, became a transit point for the exchange of severely wounded or disabled prisoners. When German resistance in North Africa began to crumble in the spring of 1943, the number of prisoners in American custody began to increase dramatically and by May had reached 250,000. Over 50,000 Italians and 120,000 Germans, the majority from Rommel's Afrika-Korps, were shipped to the USA putting a huge strain on the available shipping as the US Navy initially put a limit of 500 PoWs per vessel, many being converted Liberty ships.

I know that I have stated several times before that without the bravery of war photographers of both sides — many of whom lost their lives in the process — *After the Battle* would never have been. One of the most interesting books covering American combat photographers is *Shooting War* by Susan D. Moeller (Basic Books Inc., New York, 1989) and I was prompted to refer to it when Mr R. Wilkins of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, sent me this photograph.

'With reference to your excellent article published in 1974 on the Battle of the Bulge, in July 1997 I, along with members of the Birmingham War Research Society, located the site of the US executions at Henri-Chappelle. It is now being infilled and in danger of disappearing. Nevertheless the owners of the DAF garage were very helpful and let me take pictures.'

I then turned to the appropriate page in Susan's book in which she describes this incident and contrasts the different media treatment meted out to the Japanese as opposed to the Germans:

'The World War II photographs of the German enemy most analogous to the series of the burning Japanese were pictures documenting the execution by firing squad of three captured German spies. However, the photographs were only released by the War Department and appeared in *Life* a month after the surrender of the German forces, although the executions had occurred the previous December after the Nazi breakthrough at Bastogne. In a series of nine images taken by *Life* photographer Johnny Florea, the process of the executions was traced from the prisoners walking out to their blindfolding and death at the stake. The close-up images, though horrible, pictured a traditional form of death; compared to the flamethrower's modern twist of killing by burning a person alive, death by a volley of bullets to the heart is quick and relatively painless. The Germans also appeared to deserve their fate; whereas the burning Japanese was a regular soldier in combat, the Germans were killed only after being captured as spies in American uniform.'

Then in January 1998 I received a fascinating follow up from Samuel C. Dickey of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, referring to the same set of photographs.

'I was a member of the firing party which was composed of military police from Company A, 509th Military Police Battalion of the First Army and other battalions of MPs. However, the weapons were not Garands but bolt-action 1903 Springfields.'

The end of another piece of Second War history? Compare Mr Wilkins' 1997 picture with those on page 28 of issue 4 and also pages 110-112 of Jean Paul's *Battle of the Bulge Then and Now.*

Of the thousands of letters I have received during the past 25 years, one in particular sticks in my mind. It came from a Mr Hume who said he was not in a position to send any money but hoped I could send him the back issues he wanted anyway. When I read his address I could understand why: the gentleman was in prison! He said he was serving life imprisonment for killing someone in a bank raid in Zurich and at that point something struck a chord in my memory. I looked again at the signature and my mind rolled back to the late 1940s . . . to the days of rationing and the black market . . . and an horrific killing which was headlined at the time as the Headless Torso murder. Brian Douglas Hume had stabbed to death a second-hand car dealer, Stanley Setty, and disposed of the dismembered body by dropping the pieces from a light aircraft over the Thames Estuary. At his trial, Hume was only convicted as being an accessory but on his release, he brazenly sold his confession to the *Sunday Pictorial* in the full knowledge that he could not be tried a second time for the same offence. And here in my hand was a letter from the same man!

I have received so many nice letters that it seems wrong to single out any particular one. Many readers have used the magazine to further their own interests and revisit the battlefields but I was touched to receive the following from Harry Saelens of Tillsonburg, Ontario, in March 1997: 'The main purpose of this letter is to compliment you and your staff on your excellent publication and to tell you the way it has affected my life over the past 24 years. I am a veteran of the Canadian Army Infantry Corps from August 1944 until May 1946, although, due to my age at that time, I did not see overseas service. In 1973, and for the next 11 years, I was a member of the militia and formed a Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron, retiring with the rank of captain.

'In late 1973, I purchased a copy of issue No. 1 of *After the Battle* at the military PX store. The picture of the Jeep on the cover started me on my collection of military vehicles and at present I have three military Jeeps.

'Over the next number of years, your magazine took me to many locations and battle sites and in 1984 I travelled to England to meet up with Peter Gray in Portsmouth and attended the 40th anniversary of D-Day. We camped at Utah Beach and visited many of the locations that I had only read about including Ste Mère-Eglise, Cherbourg and Bayeux.

'In 1989, I returned to England to meet again with Peter Gray for his 45th anniversary D-Day tour. This time we sailed from Weymouth and camped in Arromanches. I attended the June 6th ceremony at Arromanches; visited the museum, and made a stop at Pegasus Bridge. My French friends from Bayeux (whom I had first met in 1984) picked me up following the parade and I traveled to Paris with them.

Harry Saelens of Tillsonburg, Ontario, tells me that he was motivated to collect Jeeps by the cover picture on our first edition. 'At present, I have three plus a large collection in my basement of military items from WW2. My collection has been featured on Canadian TV and in a number of local newspapers.'

'In 1992, I returned to France with my wife and, with the aid of issue 29 "Cross-Channel Guns", visited some of the sites including the museum at Battery Todt, Cap Gris-Nez, and other points of interest were covered, such as Pointe du Hoc, St Mère-Eglise and another stop at Pegasus Bridge museum. While at the Pegasus Café, I met Madame Gondrée who said that she was sorry that a Canadian flag was not flying but that it had been stolen. I told her that I would send her a new one when I returned to Canada. This I did and received a nice thank you note from her.

'When I received issue 78 "The Big 28cm Railway Gun", I contacted Mr David Davis and made a trip to his Battery Todt museum to see the cannon and also met him when I stayed at his Hotel Normandy. As I was also interested in the V-weapon sites as outlined in issue 6, a side trip was made to the bunker at Watten and the dome site at Wizernes.

'In 1994, it was back to Normandy again for the 50th anniversary. This time I flew direct to Paris where my French friend picked me up. We attended the June 6th ceremony at the Bayeux War Memorial with the Queen in attendance. Side trips were made to the gun battery at Longues and the D-Day wrecks museum at Port-en-Bessin as featured in issue 34.

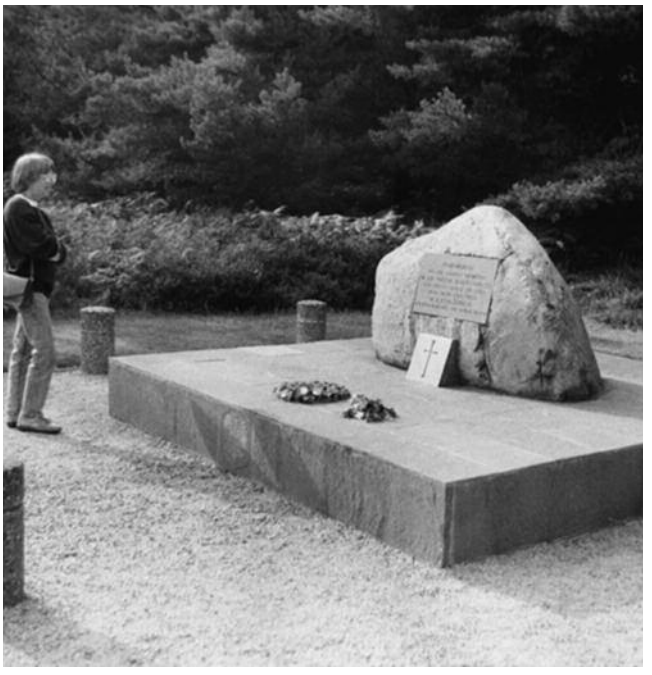
'In 1995, I purchased your *D-Day Then and Now* books and found them most interesting. I spotted myself in the picture taken at the Bayeux parade — the large picture on page 683. Also the Scots piper and the drummer in the centre picture were traveling companions on Peter Gray's tours.

'My last trip to Normandy was in August 1996. Once again I joined up with my French friends in Bayeux and this time visited such places as the Omaha War Memorial and the War Memorial in Caen. I also went to the new museum at the radar station at Douvres.

'Due to the interest created by your magazines and all the information contained therein, I found my trips to the D-Day battlefields most rewarding. I hope to return once again soon as there are still many locations that I have read about in your books. They were responsible for my meeting with many veterans and friends.

'Since 1989, all my visits to Normandy have been put on video tape so that I can relive the many places visited. Without having received your magazines since issue 1, my trips would not have taken place. Thank you once again for your excellent publication.'

'These pictures are from my 1984 trip to Normandy', wrote Harry. 'The first *(left)* was taken on the main square in Bayeux following the restored military vehicle parade. L-R: myself; René Lefetey, a local resident; Richard, my son; my friend from Paris, Claude Dudouit; and a member from one of the British restoration groups. The second picture was *(right)* taken in the Bayeux camp site. The command car, owned by Peter Gray, was the one in which I rode during the parade.'



Katyn in Manhattan . . . Katyn at Cannock. The striking monument in New York is contrasted by the simple boulder close by the German Military Cemetery which stands on Cannock Chase, (see page 59). Although I like to include pictures of memorials relevant to a particular story, there have been so many erected in recent years that it is difficult to keep track of them all.

Ray Corley of Scarborough, Ontario, sent me some nice photographs as a follow-up to issue 92: 'Your edition on Katyn was (as usual) excellent. In referring to memorials, however, you failed to mention the most striking of any war memorial I have ever seen. It is on the waterfront of the Hudson River in the USA opposite the World Trade Center in Manhattan. It shows a Polish cavalry officer, hands and wrists tied, being bayonetted from behind. The plaques explain the tragedies of the deportations to Siberia in 1939 and the massacre in 1940.'

Hyman Haas from the Bronx and I have corresponded good-naturedly on our differing opinions regarding the recent spate of new memorials (see issue 92, pages 34-35), and in June 1996 Hyman sent me several press cuttings on new memorial projects in the States.

'Dear Mr Ramsey. Nowadays whenever I encounter a newspaper account of the placing of a World War 2 monument, or plans for such projects, I think of you. I know your attitude regarding proliferation of battlefield monuments and I can't help wondering what you think of such monuments emplaced in local municipalities? I can't say what is happening in Britain in this regard, but in the USA war monuments are still being emplaced.

'After 50 years people are still remembering World War 2 with new monuments. I can understand Vietnam veterans working for the commemoration of their war. They really were badly treated for their efforts. Also the veterans of the so called "forgotten war" — Korea — are now memorializing their efforts and deservedly so. But new monuments for World War 2 keep pace and enclosed are the reports of a monument in Chicopee, Massachusetts, a small town about 50 miles from Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

'I need not comment further on the monuments as the articles speak for themselves. What is obvious is that people want to be remembered through the events the monuments represent. As World War 2 veterans are reaching advanced ages (I am 80 years young), and as the great abyss nears and beckons, the need to be remembered as part of great historical times and events may be overpowering.'

To your Editor, the most poignant memorials are those erected on the precise spots where particular incidents took place and I give these prime examples. My old geography master Deryk Wakem of Deeping St James, who sadly died suddenly in December 1997, had a penchant for visiting Scandinavia, having written the Finnish story for me in issue 39. Deryk wrote to me in October 1995: 'Last month Jean and I were in Denmark. Driving down to the shore of the Little Belt one day, using a track which ultimately petered out, we came across a wayside memorial. It was SO well maintained, hedge neatly clipped, etc. that we did what we usually do, place flowers on it and leave a note to thank the natives, Finns, Danes, Norgies, Swedes or whatever, for their great kindness, thoughtfulness AND faithfulness in maintaining Brit. memorials.'

Sculpted monuments obviously have more impact than stones with plaques. The Polish officer being bayonetted in the back cannot fail to send out a clear message and the Montgomery statue *(above),* **unveiled in Normandy at Colleville-Montgomery on June 6, 1997, is a far better image than the awful structure erected to his memory at Port-en-Bessin (see** ***D-Day Then and Now,*** **Volume 2, page 702).**

To me, it is those tributes erected on the precise site of a tragedy which relate more closely to what one is seeking to commemorate with a war memorial. Words like 'Here on the night of . . .' or 'On this spot . . .' evoke bitter memories of lives lost — very often fruitlessly though never in vain. For such is the price of war. Far from any battlefront, even a pint in the 'local' could end in death.

'A picture of another 'on-the-spot' memorial — again in Denmark — was sent to me by Erik Skytte, of Hillerod.

'At a quiet spot in the middle of one of Denmark's largest forests, Gribskov, some 30 miles north of Copenhagen, can be found this stone which was erected in 1945 in memory of two British airmen who gave their lives on this spot on September 30, 1944. The airplane was carrying weapons for the Danish resistance movement but it hit some tall spruce trees and crashed. Both airmen were killed in the crash, and their bodies were removed by German military which came to the crash site soon after.'

Closer to home in Essex, Chigwell Parish Council made arrangements to mark a long-overdue civilian tragedy which I highlighted in *Epping Forest Then and Now* back in 1986 and the *Blitz Then and Now* (Volume 2, page 559) in 1988. The Prince of Wales pub on Manor Road, Chigwell, received a direct hit from a parachute mine at 9.45 p.m. on the night of April 19, 1941. It was a Saturday evening and the pub was packed for a darts match. Officially, the death toll was 46 but the true figure is believed to be in excess of 100. The pub was reduced to a pile of rubble as was the row of cottages which stood alongside. A replacement building erected after the war has since been renamed Sloanes Tavern, and it was here that a memorial was dedicated in April 1997 on the 50th anniversary of the disaster.

Finally, Professor David C. Kelly of the Department of Art at the University of Connecticut wrote to me about battlefield memorials following his European photographic studies concerning the impact of the two world wars.

'Perhaps', commented Profesor Kelly, 'it would interest readers how my feelings changed about the modern incursions that are being made against what I had thought should be sanctified places (as in fact some are). How could they build a sub-division on top of Hill 62 in Ypres, I had thought? How could they play on Omaha Beach and in other, similar places where so many had died and where, in fact, their bones still lie? I came to see that children playing in a shell crater or in a tank memorial are as much a tribute to war's dead as the mouldy memorials built to their memory, if not more so.

'There always have been bullies at loose in the world and sometimes wars are the only way to stop them. But, most, if not all, wars represent failures and, not unlike the poppies that blazed across the blasted Somme landscape of 1917, nature and life have a wonderful way of mocking these failures, making playthings and foils of the battlefields and machines of war. The individual heroisms of battle are not diminished by this. Rather, they are expanded. My photographs are, in part, intended to reveal this rebirth, while not minimizing the horrors of war.

'None of this is to say that wars should be forgotten. This is why, in part, we preserve some battlefields and build memorials to those who have died in battle. We need to remember wars. We need to make sure a place is made for the facts and horrors of war so that in the considering of history and the future, these facts and horrors will be a part of the equation. Some of the photographs, I hope, suggest some of that horror and menace.'

Yet sometimes it is the very contrast which brings home the memory with a vengeance. On the very ground at Vimy Ridge soaked with the blood of brave men, today children play and lovers kiss. We shall remember them.

The final march past! HM King George VI takes the salute as the 4th Battalion, Grenadier Guards, march off at the Royal Wanstead School (formerly the Infant Orphanage) at Wanstead, Essex, on June 11, 1941.

. . . and my grand finale!

In July 1996, Mr W. T. Smith of Chester wrote taking me to task for my comment in issue 92 concerning the deactivation of firearms. I said on page 53 that I considered the liberalisation of the law by the Home Office — in the wake of the Hungerford killings — to permit the ownership of fully automatic weapons, albeit deactivated, was lunacy. Mr Smith replied: 'Might I suggest that before going into print and giving an opinion . . . it would be better to find out more about the subject concerned.'

I quote from my response:

'Dear Mr Smith, Thanks for your letter which arrived coincidentally with the latest issue of *The Rifleman*. As you know, I rarely make personal comments in the magazine [save for this issue!] but I did feel one was justified in this case on deactivated weapons. My credentials to do so are the following:

a) Firearms collector for 50 years.
b) FAC holder since 1961.
c) Two court appeals against the Metropolitan Police Firearms Branch.
d) Test case fought at Stratford Quarter Sessions in 1965 re the Sterling Police Carbine.
e) Defence Council Authority held under the 1937 Firearms Act for a prohibited weapon.
f) Founder of the *Shooters Unite* campaign in 1965 against a proposal to further restrict the ownership of firearms.
g) President of a rifle club affiliated to the NSRA.

'So, as you see, I do have a right to comment but I am on *your* side.

'You may know that prohibited weapons (i.e. fully automatic), or a part of the same, even if deactivated, prior to The Firearms (Amendments) Act 1988 could only be held with an authority granted by the Secretary of State (formerly the Defence Council of the MoD). I had such a permit for a Thompson but all these permissions for private individuals were revoked in 1972 because of the perceived danger of such weapons in private hands. I could show you a mass of correspondence with the Home Office, MoD and police but I quote from just one particular letter from the Home Office to show you their position at that time with regard to such weapons, even if deactivated as mine was: " . . . it is not the Home Secretary's policy, in the interests of public security, to authorise the possession of continuous fire weapons by private individuals, save in the most exceptional circumstances. This policy is also applied in cases where the weapons have been rendered incapable of firing. Deactivation as an alternative has been suggested from time to time but the Secretary of State is advised there is no certain means short of destruction which would ensure that subsequent repair would not bring the weapon back into usable condition." '

Why then, in the aftermath of Hungerford, did the Home Office suddenly do a complete about-face and allow such weapons to become freely available without any certificate or licence being necessary? That was the point I was making.

Mounting costs forced the school to close in 1971 whereupon the building was converted into Snaresbrook Crown Court — location of the trials of many East End criminals and venue for the court-martial of your Editor in November 1997. A lifetime's interest in military history and exploring the battlefields came to grief the previous February with raids led by Constable Jason Robinson of the Plaistow CID following son Gordon's arrest for having a buckled pistol in his car outside Church House. Your Editor was arrested when he went to the police station, accompanied by our solicitor, Mark Savage (who lives up to his name), to try to get Gordon released. We both got out on bail about midnight, Gordon still suffering facial and head wounds from the beating he received during the early-morning road-rage attack on the North Circular Road. On April 8, we both returned to Plaistow station to be charged at which point young Jason threw the book at us.

Gordon with his small son Christopher and me just prior to our court-martial.

Preparing our case with Mark (left) in the bunker at Church House. Gordon was charged with seven offences under the Firearms Act 1968 and I topped the charge sheet with a respectable 18! Several appearances at Stratford Magistrates Court followed while the authorities fought to get their paperwork in order. The Crown Prosecution Service fell down badly at one hurdle when an administrative error led to two of my charges, for possession of a lovely M1 Carbine and a deactivated Sterling which I had converted back to working order to prove the statement I made on page 53 of issue 92, being scrapped by the magistrate. These charges were later re-introduced.

Anyway, having set the scene as regards my personal interest in military history, of which both *After the Battle* and my gun collection are natural spin-offs, over the past 25 years I have been given a number of battlefield trophies and relics by ex-servicemen, both inoperable and in working order, and several readers have passed over other items no longer wanted. My friend and co-founder of the magazine, Chris Stevens, also gave me his collection of old black-powder revolvers just a few days before he died in 1989.

None of the firearms acts enacted in Britain enable individuals to have non-registered weapons found on the battlefield included on firearms certificates. Indeed, I have heard of many horror stories of people surrendering weapons and ammunition to the police, only to be subsequently prosecuted. Regrettably, I also have knowledge of instances where weapons handed in to the police have subsequently been sold 'out the back door'. So I always felt that the items were far safer in my personal care, locked away in my police-approved gun-room.

We now come to February 11, 1997, when my son Gordon was beaten up while driving to work. I will let him describe what happened in his own words:

'It was the transfer of one of our aircraft artefacts to the *After the Battle* museum at Church Street which started the chain of events which led to my father and I appearing in the dock. Driving to the office at 6.30 a.m., I was involved in a road-rage incident in which the other driver attempted to force me off the road. I was chased to traffic lights where I was severely beaten by the other driver. As a result, the police were called and the bent and buckled Browning pistol (unearthed at the March 3, 1943 crash site of a Junkers Ju 88 at Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex — see *The Blitz,* volume 3, page 232) which had been in my car was confiscated.

'I was arrested and spent the day in the cells at Plaistow police station, save for the time when the CID took me on a raid on both my house and that of my parents. Dad was arrested when he arrived at the station that evening with our solicitor to try to get me released. We were both subsequently charged with the possession of unlicensed firearms.'

The *Mirror* put us on their front cover in April, with a double-page spread inside, and their leading article linked me with the Dunblane outrage. From then until Gordon and I were committed to appear at Snaresbrook Crown Court in November, there was a long catalogue of delays and adjournments in the Magistrates Court.

£20,000 Lucky Numbers
PLAY LIVE TONIGHT ITV 7PM CARD INSIDE
The Mirror
LOYAL TO LABOUR, LOYAL TO YOU 30p
Woman stabbed to death in pizza parlour catfight
LAST CALL TO JOIN THE OFFER OF THE DECADE
A MILLION FLIGHTS!
FROM £25 RETURN
Thomas Cook
GET MY PALS OFF GUN RAP
SHOWBIZ EXCLUSIVE
OUR MAD MAN MATTHEW MEETS EVEN MADDER CARREY
MP's amazing plea to top cop

After much horse-trading with the Crown Prosecution Service, on indictment the original 24 charges were reduced to 10 counts for me and 3 for Gordon. Our barrister, Anthony Allston, had warned us that we must expect a sentence of up to nine months' imprisonment and also that we might be remanded in custody when we pleaded guilty on November 18. Consequently, I had to work day and night to complete this edition to make sure it would appear in time in my enforced absence.

In the event, when we appeared before His Honour Judge Samuels on December 16 (an appropriate anniversary) for sentence, I received eight terms of imprisonment totalling 13 years, fortunately to run concurrently and, even more fortunately, to be suspended for two years. I was also fined £4,000 (or ordered to spend 90 days in jail) and charged with police costs. Gordon received 18 months suspended for two years plus a fine and costs.

Sadly, the stress of it all led Gordon to reappraise his direction in life and decide to leave *After the Battle* to set up his own mail order business, Battlefield Relics and Books.

Although this is a somewhat ignominous end to my story, because of my long years in writing about military justice, I prefer to look on my Crown Court appearance as my court-martial, and my sentence as time served as a prisoner-of-war.

As of issue 101, Karel officially takes over the reins as Editor and I wish him many happy years ahead.

Rupert Allason, whom readers will know better under his pen-name of Nigel West, has helped me on several occasions over the past 25 years (see for example issue 74), and he was appalled when he heard we had been arrested. He offered to be a character witness and, at the same time, to write to the Commissioner of Police, Sir Paul Condon, on my behalf. I heard nothing further until we received a surprise visit from two reporters from the *Mirror* who tried to suggest that I had paid Rupert to vouch for me. The *Mirror* was already waging a vendetta against him because of his success in a libel case against them the previous year and were seeking to discredit him in the forthcoming General Election in which he was the Conservative candidate for Torbay. The *Mirror* splashed the story on their front page on April 25, and Rupert lost his seat by 12 votes. However, he was then even more determined to stand by me at our Crown Court appearances on November 18 and December 16.

In the dock at last . . . but this time it was for real! Photographs in British courts in session are banned so I dug through my old albums to find this picture I took of Gordon and me in the dock at the Old Bailey in 1975 for issue 11.

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